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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMEN

BY

CANDY CHENG-JARDINE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN
ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1988

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMEN submitted by CANDY CHENG-JARDINE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in Adult and Higher Education.

E. Miklos
(Supervisor)

James M Small

Date 15 April 1988

DEDICATION

With love to my mother whose determination, independence and inner strength I now appreciate. And to Rosabella, my cousin, whose courage, love of life and wisdom I admire.

ABSTRACT

The central purpose of this study was to describe and interpret crucial factors and situations that influenced the educational participation of Chinese immigrant women in light of the various adjustment problems they experienced.

Semi-structured taped interviews were conducted with 15 Chinese immigrant women who had taken part in some formal learning activities in Canada. The study was restricted to those who had established residency in Canada for less than 10 years. As well, the participants were selected on the basis of their diverse life experiences, educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

A number of personal, socio-cultural and educational issues were explored during the interviews. In the data analysis, a thematic approach was used to interpret the various personal, socio-cultural and educational factors that the participants perceived as important in their educational involvement and general adjustment.

The participation of the majority of the learners was contigent upon a pressing need to overcome a language barrier. By and large, language difficulty was closely related to limited education. Language learning was highly important in the initial stage (first or second years) of resettlement. Immigrant women with more extensive educational backgrounds, experienced comparatively easier adjustment. Their educational involvement tended to be more situation-oriented and continuous, but was intermittent in nature.

The crucial elements that facilitated these women's education were their family support, personal goals and expectations, self evaluation and perception of their own abilities as well as some other cultural and situational factors. Married women involved in raising a young family were at a distinct disadvantage in terms of addressing their educational needs and various adjustment problems.

The results of the study have implications for educators who are involved in teaching immigrants, for institutions which offer relevant programmes and for researchers who conduct studies in this area.

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I wish also to thank the Chinese women who so generously shared their experiences with me. Often, in some darkened moments, there lurks a glimmer of hope transpired by none other than their courage and steadfastness which makes my own journey through this adopted land not so much an ordeal but a challenge.

My greatest debt is to my husband, Paul, whose loving support and boundless patience helped make everything possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

ONE INTRODUCTION 1
  Significance of the Study 2
  Assumptions, Delimitations and Limitations 5
  Terms of Reference 6
  Organization of the Study 7

TWO REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE 9
  Education and Adjustment 9
    Economic Adjustment 11
    Social Adjustment 12
    Cultural Adjustment 13
    Structural Mobility 14
    Psychological Adjustment 15
  Problems of Immigrant Women 16
    Age 18
    Ethnicity 19
    Gender 19
    Marital Status 20
    Personality 20
    Social Class 21
    Family Dynamics 22
  Learners' Motivation 23
  Summary 25

THREE METHODOLOGY 27
  Research Perspective 27
  Research Design 29
  Data Analysis 33
  Participants 36

FOUR PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS 40
  Group One - High Participation 40
  Group Two - Moderate Participation 46
  Group Three - Low Participation 54

FIVE FACTORS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT 58
  Personal Factors 58
    English Proficiency 59
    Employment Scenario 62
    Family Dynamics 67

Chapter Page

Personality 71
Socio-Cultural Factors 78
Economic Status 78
Political Forces 82
Support Systems 86
Social and Cultural Values 93
Educational Factors 102
Parental Expectations 102
Role Model/Mentor 105
Educational Experiences 108
Educational Activities and Plans 118

SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATION GROUPS......... 123
High Participation 123
Low Participation 128
Moderate Participation 131
Discussion 133

SEVEN SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTION 138
Summary 138
Focus of the Study 138
Findings of the Study 139
Conclusions 146
Recommendations 148
For Educators 148
For Institutions 150
For Research 154
Reflection 155

BIBLIOGRAPHY 158

APPENDIX A. Interview Guide 168

APPENDIX B. Pilot Profiles 171

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I	Selected Personal Characteristics of the Participants	37
II	Selected Family Data on the Participants	38
III	Characteristics and Educational Involvement of Members of High, Moderate, and Low Participation Groups	124

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a major transition which has far-reaching effects on various aspects of an emigree's life. Regardless of their migration motives, for many newcomers migration signifies a severance of ties to their homelands. Confronted by a new milieu, an emigree inevitably becomes a student whose major occupation is learning: a new culture, a new language, a new occupation, new coping skills. Depending on one's background, temperament, and circumstances this learning process, in turn, interacts with the adjustment and subsequent integration to the recipient country. Immigrant women who have come as dependents sponsored by their husbands or next of kin are usually burdened with domestic duties which narrow their contact with the broader society. For those who are unskilled, not employed, or undereducated, integration to the new land is especially difficult. In the end, they have to rely on learning or retraining in order to better adapt to life in Canada. Yet, their quest for new skills or knowledge may frequently be hindered by numerous barriers.

In order to examine the educational and adjustment concerns of a specific category of immigrants, fifteen Chinese immigrant women, all residents of Greater Edmonton and all having been involved in formal learning activities in

Canada were selected as participants for this project. The direction of the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Why do Chinese immigrant women chose to become involved in various learning activities?
2. In what ways do personal factors influence their educational participation?
3. In what ways do socio-cultural factors influence their educational participation?
4. In what ways does previous educational background influence their educational participation?
5. What are the common and the distinctive characteristics of members of high, moderate and low educational participation groups?

These were the basic questions explored in the study. However, some related issues such as the interrelationship of educational participation and general adjustment were also addressed during the course of the data analysis. The extent to which various factors either facilitate or inhibit the involvement of immigrant women in educational activities was also explored.

Significance of the Study

A recent Immigration Report published by Alberta Manpower, Immigration and Settlement Services (1986) indicated that 68,000 newcomers have arrived in Alberta since 1981. Of these, 33,202 are of Asian origin. Asian emigrees have overtaken their counterparts from other continents in number in recent years to the extent shown in the following statistics: 30% in 81-82, 50% in 83, 57% in 84. This trend clearly indicates an ongoing shift of the ethnic component in the immigrant population. Since 1981, female immigrants have comprised about half of the newcomer population. According to the 1986 Census, the third largest ethnic language group in Edmonton is Chinese, totalling 15,450 following Ukranian speakers (19,765) and German speakers (15,875). From its 1986 circulation survey, Edmonton Chinese News, one of the three local Chinese newspapers, estimated that Edmonton has approximately 30,000 Chinese in 6,000 households. Correspondingly, Chinese immigrant women comprise a growing minority which merits some research attention.

Numerous studies have been done in the past to deal with immigrants' social, economic, psychological and educational problems. A good deal of research has been conducted to investigate the various adaptation and educational issues unique to some ethnic groups in Canada. Relatively few studies have addressed the particular needs of immigrant women. Even fewer attempts have been directed toward a more comprehensive understanding of adult immigrant learners of oriental descent. This study is an attempt to help fill this gap by documenting the information relevant to these learners, with the intent of helping to sensitize educators, policy makers, and institutions to the particular concerns of some Chinese immigrant women.

As a rule, large-scale empirical research predominates the field of ethnic studies. These shed little light on the lived experiences and social realities of the individuals involved. The intent of this project was to view the participants' situation from their own perspectives, giving them a chance to interpret their own feelings, perceptions, and expectations. Accordingly, the main thrust of this study was descriptive and interpretive in nature.

In Don Juan, Byron elaborated the diverse realities perceived by men and women as he wrote, "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart ...'Tis woman's whole existence." That a woman's world view, in many instances, does not necessarily accord with that of a man's is well established. By scrutinizing various issues from the perspective of immigrant women, the kind of logic with which they relate to their world and the contextual elements such as cultural beliefs and social norms to which they react are likely to become more apparent. This understanding may then alert educators and policy makers alike to be more responsive to the needs of Chinese immigrant women.

As an adult learner, an immigrant educator, and a Chinese immigrant woman herself, the researcher was drawn to explore the little-studied world of a small group of Chinese immigrant women who had experienced formal adult education in Canada.

Assumptions, Delimitations and Limitations

Assumptions

A few assumptions were adopted on the part of the researcher. The basic premise is that Chinese immigrant women have a number of educational and adjustment concerns, even though they may vary in extent and intensity among individuals. Moreover, education is assumed to play an important role in their adaptation. Furthermore, their educational involvement may vary in degrees. As well, it is assumed that women's and men's lived experiences and frames of reference, on many occasions, do not converge. In relation to the group under study, a major preconceived notion is that they are aware of many of the facilitating and inhibiting factors in their educational pursuits.

Delimitations

The study involved only adult Chinese immigrant women who were twenty-one years of age or older, who had participated in some formal educational activities in Canada, and who were residents of greater Edmonton. The age factor helped to focus attention on more mature learners who had either family responsibilities or employment or both. Naturally, they had very different sets of needs and concerns than younger learners.

Limitations

The conclusions drawn from the study primarily reflect the situations of those who participated in the project. The concerns of Chinese immigrant women may not fully and accurately mirror the experience of other immigrant women, particularly of dissimilar cultures and racial origins. Further, the study centred solely on issues closely related to "adult" women learners and not necessarily to those of younger learners. Since the study involved those with experience in formal learning activities, it probably does not adequately express the needs and problems of those who have no further education experience in Canada.

Definition of Terms

A number of terms are used throughout the report in a manner which warrants a specific definition. These terms are defined below.

Chinese immigrant women -- women of Chinese descent from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam or China who came to Canada within ten years at the time the participants were selected.

Educational participation -- enrolment in a course or programme involving formal teaching and learning activities.

Participation category or group -- categorization of prticipants based on extent of involvement in learning activities. High, moderate and low participation categories involved, respectively, at least five, two, or one month of part-time learning activities per year.

Personal Factors -- characteristics of individuals such as personality traits, family relationships, language proficiency and employment experience.

Socio-Cultural Factors -- variables associated with the economic, political and socio-cultural backgrounds of immigrants.

Educational Factors -- variables associated with an immigrant's prior formal education experiences.

Adjustment -- the process through which an immigrant modifies attitudinal and behavioural patterns to be compatible with the new environment.

Other significant terms are defined either explicitly or implicitly when they are introduced in the body of the report.

Organization of the Report

This report consists of seven chapters. In this chapter the major research questions, the significance of the study, the assumptions, delimitations and limitations, the definition of terms, and the organization of the report are described in five sections. Chapter Two contains the literature review. A report of the research methods and procedure is presented in Chapter Three. The participants' backgrounds are briefly profiled in Chapter Four. The results of analyzing the data to identify the extent to which various factors influence the level of educational participation are presented in Chapter Five. An overview of the characteristics of high, moderate and low participation groups is presented in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven consists of summary, conclusions, recommendation and reflection sections. The bibliography and appendices, which follow the final chapter, complete the report.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Selected literature dealing with various aspects of education and immigrants' adjustment process is presented in the first part of the review. The problems confronting immigrant women learners and the different motivational theories of adult learners are examined, respectively, in the subsequent sections.

Education and Adjustment

After their arrival in a new land, emigrees are presented with two choices: either to allow the land to remain unknown or to begin to adjust. Adjustment is an extremely complex process that touches on numerous aspects of an emigre's life. The literature examined centres on adjustment issues relevant to South East Asian immigrants but does not distinguish between problems that are unique either to men or to women. Much of the research has been done in Canada, the United States and Australia, from a predominantly sociological perspective.

According to Hurh and Kim (1984), adaptation is the process through which immigrants modify or change their attitudinal and behavioural patterns in order to maintain and improve their life conditions in a manner that is compatible with the new environment. A number of researchers (Evans, 1984; Goldlust and Richmond, 1977; Hurh, 1977; Isajiw, 1981; Kalbach, 1981) who have investigated immigrant adjustment issues have all concluded that education attained in the home country has a significant impact on immigrants' adaptation to the new land. While some have concentrated on the relationship of the immigrants' education and their subsequent economic adaptation to the host country, others have dealt exclusively with their adaptation in social or cultural areas.

Although the level of education, in many instances, has a bearing on an immigrant's successful adaptation, other relevant personal and situational factors must also be taken into consideration. In fact, Rao, Richmond, and Zubrzycki (1984) claimed that education can have a negative as well as positive impact on an immigrant's adaptation. Education level is one of the major criteria used by immigration authorities to categorize the "independent" type immigrants. Members of this group, admitted to Canada primarily on the strength of their training and occupational skills, are generally highly educated and are assumed by some researchers to be more successful in economic and social integration. Through their work with Korean immigrants in the United States, Hurh and Kim (1984) identify aspects such as immigrants' adaptation processes as ones that involve economic/occupational, social, cultural, psychological and structural adjustments. This finding seems to reflect the multi-faceted dimension of adjustment; the process itself is rarely a linear and smooth undertaking without cultural and value conflicts.

As most of the literature suggests, there is a hierarchy of adaptation patterns among most immigrants. For newer immigrants, economic adjustment of varying degrees is more manageable than social or cultural adaptation. Psychological and structural integration, on the other hand, is more difficult to attain. The sections which follow deal with the various aspects of adaptation.

Economic Adjustment

This is a process in which an immigrant is able to utilize their experience, occupational training and skills or education to secure employment and establish economic stability in the host country. A few researchers (Hurh, 1977; Isajiw, 1981; Ornstein, 1983) concluded that education received from the homeland is a major determinant of immigrants' success in occupational achievement in the new country. Goldlust and Richmond (1974) maintained that education plays an important role in determining the speed and pattern of the immigrants' adaptation experience. On the other hand, Bach and Bach (1980) found that education from the home country does not necessarily lead to occupational success, because of the non-transferability of educational and professional training. As a result, downward mobility caused by underemployment is very often the case among new immigrants.

On the basis of the findings of his study on new immigrants to Australia, Evans (1984) stated that a high education level from the home country does not have a direct bearing on the immigrants' occupational success if English competency is minimal. Hurh and Kim (1978) also viewed English proficiency as a major factor which helps second and third generation Korean immigrants to assimilate more successfully in the United States. In their study Ornstein and Sharma (1983) found that, despite the generally high level of education of Third World immigrants, they often face more serious problems than immigrants from some other countries with respect to their economic adaptation. In a comparative study, Ornstein (1983) further concluded that European immigrants are better able to use occupational skills and training from their home countries while jobs obtained by Oriental immigrants are more dependent on educational qualifications. Such a trend is verified by a 1982 Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower Planning Secretariat Report that discusses some cases of underemployment among groups of immigrants of Indochinese descent.

Social Adjustment

This is a process through which an immigrant socializes and interacts frequently with members of the host society.

Apart from economic adjustment, results of a number of studies indicate that education also serves as a predictor of immigrants' social integration. Wong (1972) made the point that educational experience gained in Canada has provided immigrants with more chances to interact with the majority members of the host society. Nagata (1979) and Reitz (1980), however, argued that social adaptation tends to be an inter-generational process which takes time to develop. Others proposed that the immigrants' adaptation modes depend heavily on situational factors, social milieu, and structural as well as cultural elements that interact with one another. Woon (1986) stated that the immigrants' perceptions and expectations of the receiving country have a direct impact on the level of adaptation. Education attained before emigration can be considered as a facilitating element among others which, in some instances, helps immigrants to a smoother and easier adaptation. Some researchers (Ashley, 1976; Mickelson, 1978; Ng and Ramirez, 1981; McGowan, 1982) found that immigrants, particularly women who are housebound or not employed or who have low education levels, face the biggest barrier in their social adjustment.

Cultural Adjustment

This is a process in which an immigrant incoporate or accept to varying degrees the ways of life, cultural norms and values of the host society. In a series of large-scale studies, Hurh (1977) and Hurh and Kim (1978, 1984) discovered that the cultural adaptation of some Korean immigrants takes on an additive dimension, in that immigrants incorporate the new ways of life with their own cultural values. With the passage of time, ethnic cultural identity takes on a new character. Khatun (1984) and Wong (1972) both found that education can help immigrants to adjust culturally to their adopted country. However, consideration of their own culture might have been one of the critical factors that prohibited some immigrants from becoming culturally integrated. To that end, Lambert (1975) explained that the home culture forms and shapes the basis and content of a newcomer's thoughts, as well as the way in which her/his thought is expressed. Chan (1976) and Covey (1983) found that differences in cultural expectations, assumptions and conventions had, in some way, affected the adjustment process of some Chinese students. The suggestion by Nagata (1979) about the issue of cultural adjustment appears to be more elaborate. Nagata conceded that in a modern, complex society where most educational and occupational goals increasingly converge, ethnic cultural identity tends to yield to class identity, particularly in areas concerned with economic, social and political advancement.

Structural Mobility

This is a long and involved process through which a group can participate on an equal basis in all institutions of the host society. This mobility can rarely be achieved by first generation immigrants. Kalbach and Richmond (1980, 1984) reported that education helps to bring about upward mobility for most immigrants. Economic and occupational mobility have, in some cases, brought forth greater social mobility; however, structural integration can only be achieved by second or third generation immigrants. Successful structural integration also depends on the constitution of a particular ethnic group, that is, how established an ethnic community is in the host country. To illustrate the point, Woon (1986) suggested that the fairly new Vietnamese community in Canada will take at least one or two generations to achieve significant structural integration.

Psychological Adjustment

Psychological adjustment, which calls for extensive identification with the host society, appears to be the most problematic area in an immigrant's adaptation. Depending on the cultural policy of the host country, this aspect can promote or inhibit the psychological adjustment of immigrants. Eisenstadt (1954),in his work on absorption of immigrants, clearly defined a desocialization and resocialization process. By refining the model, Richardson (1967) conceptualized a three-phase process. The early settlement period is characterized by a sense of excitement then mortification, which may then transform to a period of identifying with the new society, with the final phase witnessing the acculturation and adoption of the host group's values and beliefs. Sluzki (1979) observed that most immigrants first go through an overcompensation phase, then a decompensation stage before reaching a resolution period. He also implied that some immigrants may never progress from one stage to another. By and large, these are all static and theoretical models which may not closely and accurately approximate all immigrants' adjustment experience. Nevertheless, male immigrants, who are likely to be outward-oriented because of job responsibilities, may adjust better than female, who are likely to be inward-oriented due to their familial duties.

The above summary offers some explanation of the relationship between education gained from the home country and adjustment. Further, it provides for a basic understanding of the adjustment patterns most immigrants go through. More specifically, it defines economic, social and cultural adjustments as typical problem areas which newer immigrants are concerned with during the earlier phase of resettlement.

Problems of Immigrant Women

Due to inadequate basic information, as well as a scarcity of systematic studies, educational problems concerning Chinese immigrant women still fall within a poorly charted area. While inferences have to be drawn from some general research on immigrants, a few studies have attempted to unveil some of the crucial problems that immigrant women face in their learning endeavours.

Husaini and Susut (1984) surveyed the needs of 162 immigrant women of various ethnic backgrounds in Edmonton. They discovered that while there are provisions for their family-related economic needs, their personal, educational and psychological needs remain largely unfulfilled. The major concerns of immigrant women regarding educational pursuits range from getting information about further education and training, improving English proficiency, learning about educational facilities available for women, to evaluating their original training and qualifications during the initial settlement period. With the passage of time, the same women still regard getting information relating to further education and training as top priority followed by learning about correspondence courses available in Edmonton and receiving counselling on careers and education. For those who do not participate in any educational activities, caring for a home and family in new surroundings, working long hours in poor working conditions, and the lack of language ability are often cited as major problems.

In his study on immigrant women's language needs across Canada, Mickelson (1978:20) profiled some of the salient characteristics of language learners, as well as of non-learners. Those who have a high level of education (12+ years) in their home country tend to participate more. On the other hand, those who have less than seven years of education tend to avoid such pursuits. In addition, three-quarters of the learners were between the ages of twenty and forty. Those who were in the range of 60 years of age or older were less likely to participate. Many language learners are active in the labour force. In this category, those who plan to change occupation in the future are more likely to engage in language training.

In much of the literature, including these two major studies, a number of factors emerge as influential elements in determining the participation of immigrant women in formal learning activities. These elements include age, ethnicity, gender, marital status, social class, personality, and family dynamics. In the ensuing discussion each of this factor is examined in relation to educational involvement.

Age

Age is a factor that has a direct bearing on immigrants' educational plans in the host country according to Rao, Richmond, and Zubrzycki (1984). They discovered that younger immigrants are likely to be better educated than older ones, regardless of birth-place, generation, or period of immigration. Mickelson (1978) found that women who are highly likely to be involved in language training are between the ages of twenty and forty. Although age alone cannot determine the involvement in educational activities of immigrant women, it is a factor that commands considerable attention from some researchers who deal with immigrant education.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, as reported by Ng and Ramirez (1981), is hardly an issue for most immigrants in their home countries, which tend to be racially homogeneous. Upon their entry to Canada, their individual ethnicities are reflected in their legal status. Therefore, it is a social construction which defines an immigrant group's position in Canadian social and economic structure. Ethnicity, according to Husaini and Susut (1984) and McGovern (1982), has negatively affected the immigrant women's educational and occupational achievement. Richmond (1984) suggested that the double burden theory (ethnicity and gender) has hampered, to a great extent, the development of immigrant women's potential.

Gender

McGowan (1982) and Netting (1985) among other researchers on immigrant women's issues stated that gender is a reality that has segregated women from equal participation in educational, social, economic, and political activities with their male counterparts. In fact, Mickelson (1978) reported that some immigrant women were restrained from taking part in any formal learning activities by other family members like their parents or husbands. On the other hand, Indra (1981) maintained that immigrant women who are used to the traditional role of nurturer and care-giver may suffer role inconsistency if they are required to take part in educational and economic activities outside their homes.

Marital Status

Women who came to Canada as dependents of their husbands or other family members seem to face more institutional barriers than do others in their attempts to upgrade their educational qualifications through government sponsorship (McGovern, 1982). The current government policy is that training and living allowances will only be awarded to the "most employable" member in an immigrant family. Married women who came to Canada through family sponsorship usually are not eligible for most government subsidized training programmes. Ashley (1976), Ng (1981) and Haven (1983) pointed out that immigrant women burdened with numerous family responsibilities, particularly those who are married and with young children to care for, make up the group which face the most difficulties in learning endeavours.

Personality

Whether individual personality has a significant impact on the success or failure of an immigrant's adaptation is still an open issue. Although there is no conclusive finding which suggests that the rigidity or flexibility of an individual's personality relates to one's negative or positive adjustment experience, there is evidence in immigrants' language learning situations to suggest that those who are extroverted and field independent are more likely to be successful learners (Brown, 1987; Rubin, 1975). Success in language learning obviously helps ease most adjustment concerns and, in a number of instances, enables some to embark on further learning activities.

Social Class

Studies relating to social class as a predictor to explain immigrants' level of success in adaptation are far from conclusive; in fact, there are contradictory findings in some of the recent studies conducted by Hurh and Kim (1984). Husaini (1981) noted that social class seems to break down in the face of a hostile host culture. In its place, ethnic solidarity is established. Kalbach (1980), on the other hand, suggested that social distancing is a common pattern which emerges at both the lower and the upper ends of the social ladder in the immigrants' adjustment experience. In his studies, Sluzki (1979) reported that immigrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to cling to their past or their home culture and, in some instances, a subculture is formed as a coping strategy. In contrast, those with middle class backgrounds are more receptive and have more chance to interact with the host culture.

Family Dynamics

A number of studies have indicated that immigrant women's relationships with their family members have impacted on their adjustment process. From her study on immigrant daughters, Jahn (1981) observed that the personal or educational goals of this group were very often at odds with those of other family members. In many instances, they had to yield to the expectations of the family at large. The family size, its composition, and communication patterns all bear on the overall adjustment experience of the women. More importantly, the role played by women within the family unit seems to have a significant impact on the life course they plan to take (Gilligan, 1982).

The literature reveals that immigrant women's educational needs are largely left unmet. While various factors which may have influenced their participation in formal learning activities have been discussed, it is important to note that situational factors within the larger context of their cultural and historical background should also be considered.

Learners' Motivation

In today's fast-changing world of rapid technological and social advances, it becomes increasingly necessary to engage in continuous learning activities beyond traditional schooling. For most immigrant women, learning and retraining become a necessary part of the adjustment process. As has been pointed out by Knowles (1975), learning is a life-long process. The growth of adult education is a global phenomenon. In the past two decades alone, a number of theorists have investigated the motivational forces that impel adults to learn. An understanding of the basic adult learning motivations may, in turn, contribute to the understanding of the various learning experiences and involvement patterns of adult immigrant learners.

In general, researchers who contributed to the field of adult education developed their theories on two different assumptions: one is. Maslow's needs theory (1968), the other is the adult's life stage development. Maslow contended that human motivations can be explained by a hierarchy of needs. Lower-order needs such as physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem needs must be satisfied before an individual will move on to the higher-order need of self actualization. Using Maslow's theory as a conceptual framework, Boshier (1977) developed a needs theory for adult learners. Basically, adult learners are attracted to education by two factors: growth needs and deficiency needs. Growth needs, being high level needs, if met, can provide the learners with more life space. Deficiency needs, if fulfilled, can create more life chances for the learners. Boshier also observed that higher-income learners attend to their growth needs more than lower-income learners, who are more concerned with survival needs. In his case study of 22 active learners, Houle (1963) formulated a typology, which classifies learners into three categories. The goal-oriented type of learners look upon education as a means of solving problems that are specific to their individual situations, the activity-oriented type use education to meet their social needs, while the learning-oriented type appear to seek knowledge for its own sake. From this perspective, the basic concept of the typology is in accordance with Maslow's model.

With reference to the adult's life stage development theory, Aslanian and Brickell (1980) reported that, based on their telephone survey of over 1,500 adults in the United States, life transitions such as marriages, divorces, job changes and so forth are the major reasons for educational renewal. In the same vein, Havighurst (1972) discovered that adult learners match their educational pursuits with their own developmental tasks.

Lindeman (1961) reported that the involvement of adults in learning is basically induced by their life situations, needs and interests. Tough's (1979) self-directed learning theory assumes that learners are motivated by the benefits they can derive from their learning activities. Viewed from this dimension, the learners' motivations may, in fact, have a grounding in both theories. Cross (1981), however, comes up with the most inclusive and fruitful framework in that she considered learners' participation as an interaction between an individual's position and her/his environment. It is a negotiation between external variables such as chances, barriers, and goals, as well as internal variables such as self-evaluation, attitudes about education, and life transition.

Summary

The conclusion drawn from various sources is that education obtained from the homeland or the new country can have a significant impact on immigrants' adjustment to a new country. Adjustment concerns that typically besiege newer immigrants are in general economical, social and cultural in nature. Consequently, psychological and structural adjustment problems that more typically beset long-term immigrants, would not have been an appropriate focus of this enquiry.

In their educational pursuits, immigrant women are confronted by a myriad of problems that range from age, ethnicity, marital status to family dynamics. However, there is limited enquiry on how factors such as motivation for, preparation, and expectation of immigration affect immigrant women's educational involvement. Moreover, little has been done to investigate how the host country's social and educational climate influences their educational activities.

In most cases, adult learners' participation in education is closely linked with their various developmental phases or specific needs. The summary of various adult learning theories, in essence, provided a conceptual background from which to examine and understand the motivations of the Chinese immigrant learners involved in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Four different topics are dealt with in this chapter. The section on research perspective serves as an explanation of the specific approach used in this project. The research design and procedure are discussed in detail in the second section. While the method of data analysis is presented in the third section, the chapter concludes with a highlight of the participants' characteristics.

Research Perspective

Within the past few decades, questions have been raised about the adequacy of research grounded in positivism to fully interpret human experience (Giorgi, 1970). More specifically, in the field of education, criticisms have been directed toward the appropriateness of using quantitative research to explain human behaviour and action (Griffiths, 1979; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). Since many immigrant issues are complex life events that hinge on individual feelings, perceptions and situations, an interpretive research approach was selected to develop a description and analysis of the immigrant women's circumstances.

James Baldwin once wrote "that everyone's life begins on a level where races, armies, and churches stop. And yet everyone's life is always shaped by races, armies and churches." From this standpoint, internal meanings are assumed to be shaped by the external forces to which an individual is subjected. It is, then, not only necessary to understand the meaning an individual attaches to a particular life event, but also to take into account the cultural, historical and social context within which the individual lives.

From her cross-sectional studies with samples drawn entirely from women in the United States, Gilligan (1978, 1982) explored the issue of the moral development of women. She concluded that women in fact have developed their own social realities and world views that are different from men's. It is not surprising that Robert Musil, in his novel The Man Without Qualities, depicted with painstaking detail the concept of multiple realities. He perceived that an individual's everyday reality is experienced as a totality, but it is within itself variegated and stratified (Berger, 1970). To this end, Farganis (1986) claimed that social theory can be enriched by incorporating the women's viewpoints in order to provide a different perspective on issues that are usually discussed from a man's standpoint.

As Smith (1974) maintained, it is only by listening to the subjective, directly-felt experiences of women that a theorist can question the conceptual organization of society. In keeping with the general tone of this research perspective, the women who participated in the study were given the opportunity to express their feelings and viewpoints with reference to their educational involvement.

Research Design and Procedures

The main data source for the study consisted of taped interviews, which varied from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours in length, with fifteen Chinese immigrant women. The content of the interviews was based on the questions set out in the interview guide (Appendix A) which was designed in three parts. Part One dealt primarily with standardized personal data such as age, marital status, occupation, language spoken, country of origin, immigration details, family size and family members' education and occupation. Part Two focused on adjustment issues, and questions were set to explore their English proficiency, family dynamics, type and extent of social networks, as well as their major adaptation concerns. Part Three enquired about their educational background and experiences in their homelands, their current learning activities, their learning experiences, and their motives and future plans.

Three taped pilot interviews were conducted, in Chinese, with three Chinese female acquaintances of the researcher in early October of 1986. The recording quality of the first pilot interview was extremely poor and rendered verbatim transcription almost impossible. The content of the other two interviews were summarized in a profile format for further reference (Appendix B). The short and unplanned presence of an interviewee's spouse during one of these two sessions appeared to have influenced the content of some responses. This was marked by a change of tone and volume, and uncharacteristic hesitancy and pauses. On the whole, the pilot interviews helped to refine the questioning technique and to identify factors that contributed to an effective interview.

The participants for the study were located through two channels. The first was through referrals from the researcher's friends and acquaintances who were made aware of the project. The second was through verbal requests to agencies such as the English as a Second Language division of Alberta Vocational Centre, the Immigrant Women's Centre, the Chinese Graduates' Association, and the Student Volunteers Campus Community at the University of Alberta.

The search for participants began in late September of 1986. By early October, eighteen potential interviewees, who were briefly informed of the nature, purpose and proceedings of the study, were identified. In order to set up an interview schedule, the researcher telephoned the eighteen women to explain in detail the purpose of the study, to clarify the issue of confidentiality and anonymity, and to arrange an interview time that was convenient to them, if they agreed to participate. Firm commitments were obtained from fifteen women: six from Alberta Vocational Centre, three from the Chinese Graduate Association, two from Student Volunteers Campus Community, one from Immigrant Women's Centre, and three from referrals by friends.

The fifteen interviews were carried out from mid-October through late December of 1986. Six interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, six in the institution they attended, and three in the researcher's office on campus. All interviews were done in an informal manner, with minimal interruption. Due to the limited English of some women, and the language preference of others, all sessions were conducted in Chinese; twelve interviews were in Cantonese and three in Mandarin, using limited mixed codes (Chinese/English) occasionally. Although the interview schedule was used as an overall guide, some flexibility was given the participants to elaborate their ideas and to offer more comprehensive answers in a fashion and order with which they felt comfortable. At the conclusion of the discourse, each woman was made aware of the possibility of follow-up phone calls to clarify information obtained from the session, if necessary.

No major problems were encountered in the collection of data. In a few cases, the warm-up period within the interview took a much longer period. A few women displayed some initial uneasiness caused by taping. The subsequent untaped, free-flowing discussion seemed to reveal some valuable information. As such, a one-time interview had some limitations as a data collection procedure.

Because of the oppressive political situation they had lived through in the past, two women were relatively restrained in the discussion of the political status in their homelands at the beginning. It was also observed that when discussing family dynamics, a few women openly discussed strained relationships between some family members, but were extremely cautious and subtle when relating stress in a marital relationship. The reserved attitude was understandable because the need to resolve any marital discord within the family unit was inherent in the Chinese culture. However, this raised the question as to how much relevant and significant information was left uncovered.

Overall, the form of language the participants used was informal but not too colloquial. This seemed to be a result of the participants' perception of the researcher as an educated person. In effect, they were using a semi-formal language register (Krashen, 1982) throughout the interview. Knowing the idiosyncratic features and psycho-sociolinguistic implications of the Cantonese dialect, the use of semi-formal register by these participants is, in fact, natural as informal register is primarily used among close family members and friends.

Given the research emphasis, it was natural that the researcher exerted some influence on the researched. For example, a number of women requested training information from the researcher. How much change was precipitated by this kind of interaction, on the part of the participants, is an open issue. The relevant point is that in an interpretive study, the researcher effect must be conceived as a part of the research process. Being a female and a Chinese immigrant, the researcher intuitively brought with her a sensitivity to and understanding of immigrant women's issues which the participants, in turn, felt comfortable to discuss. In this respect, the researcher effect was positively felt in the shared meanings/experience, and rhetorical/cultural understanding the researcher brought to the project.

Data Analysis

An interview journal was kept during and shortly after the data-collection period. Any related observations and feelings about the interviews were recorded. This information was later selectively incorporated in the general analysis process. For example, based on the observations and impressions formed about the participants within the context of the interviews, a brief journal entry about the general characteristics of each individual was usually made. Marked differences and/or similarities between and among individuals were also recorded as the interviews progressed. Some of ~~this~~ information was used electively in the section that dealt with the participant's personality traits.

Verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews were done over a period of fifteen weeks. The simultaneous translation within the transcribing process was not easy. Finding English expressions with the appropriate elocutionary and cultural impact intended in the participants' own language was a challenging task. In any event, the researcher made a conscious effort to retain the participants' intent and style of speech as much as possible. To clarify information gaps and ambiguities, a number of follow-up phone calls were made, during and immediately following the transcription period.

The transcripts were subjected to a two-phased analysis. The first of these was a coding process, and the second a refining process. During the first reading of the transcripts, three major themes -- personal, socio-cultural, and educational factors were established. Each of these themes was given a specific colour code. For instance, red was for personal information, blue was for socio-cultural data and green was for educational related matters. Within the second reading, a list of sub-categories was developed for each theme and each sub-category was assigned a three-alphabet code. For example, under personal information the three-alphabet codes included English proficiency (Eng), past employment (Pem), current employment (Cem), birth order (Bir), family component (Fac), family relationship (Far), and personality (Per). Apart from colour and alphabet coding, the relevant data were assigned a plus or minus symbol to indicate positive or negative adjustment and/or learning experience at the third reading. All coded items were given an additional two-alphabet code at the fourth reading to identify each individual's name. For instance, (SE) represented the participant Sen, (KA) stood for Kam and (LI) represented Lily, et cetera. All sub-categories were then subjected to a cut-and-paste exercise and were filed in a binder under the appropriate sub-categories of the three major common themes. Three copies of the transcripts were prepared. One remained as a complete set for future reference, one for normal cut and paste purposes, and the final copy for cut and paste of overlapping information.

During the second phase, a table-building exercise was used to highlight each individual's personal data and socio-cultural background, as well as educational and adjustment experience. Regrouping or combining of some sub-categories was conducted in this process to give each theme a sharper focus. Also, some relatively insignificant details and categories were eliminated. Tabulated information pertaining to family background was colour-coded in yellow to be included in the individual profiles.

The major idea behind the analysis process was to sift through a myriad of data and to find some systematic and logical ways to present the relevant information to the reader. It was decided, in the reporting of the data, that a profile of each participant would give the reader a better understanding of her background. As the overall approach was interpretive in nature, extensive quotations from the participants' responses are used in reporting results of the general analysis.

Participants

Fifteen Chinese immigrant women in the Greater Edmonton area were located as participants of the study. They were not chosen by a random procedure. Rather, they were selected for their various differences (as regards age, education, marital status, work experience, and place of birth). In the following pages, two tables (Tables I and II) respectively outlined some salient personal characteristics and family data of these participants.

The ages of the women ranged from 26 to 55, and the median age was 35.7. There were eleven women who were in their thirties. This was apparently a coincidence as most women who took an interest in this research project were in this age group. Ten of the women were married, four were single and one was divorced. Seven were born in Hong Kong, three in China, two each in Vietnam and Taiwan, and one in Cambodia. Their length of stay in Canada varied from one to ten years, and the median stay was 4.8 years. Ten came to Canada through sponsorship by their immediate families, four came as independent immigrants, and one came as a refugee. The levels of formal education ranged from a graduate degree

TABLE I - SELECTED PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Education	Employment Homeland	Employment Canada	Language/s Spoken	Language/s Fluency	Immigration Year	Immigration Type
Loi	30	S	Vietnam	Grade 12	Clerk	Handbag Maker	Cantonese English Vietnamese	Fluent)Functional	1983	Sponsored by brother
Wendy	32	S	Cambodia	Grade 9	Weaver	Seamtress	Cantonese Mandarin English	)Fluent Limited	1984	Sponsored by brother
Kam	37	S	Vietnam	Grade 6	Not Employed	Not Employed	Cantonese, Vietnamese, Chiuchau English	)Fluent Limited	1980	Refugee
Jane	31	M	Taiwan	B.Com.	Sales	Homemaker	Mandarin English	)Fluent	1982	Independent Immigration
Sen	29	M	Taiwan	B.A., M.A.	Teacher	Sessional	Mandarin English	)Fluent	1982	Sponsored by husband
Filie	35	M	Hong Kong	B.Com.	Business Assistant	Teacher's Aide Instructor	Mandarin, English Cantonese Shanghainese	)Fluent)Fluent	1977	Sponsored by husband
Paula	39	M	Hong Kong	Diploma, Grade 12	Executive	Secretary	Cantonese English	)Fluent	1977	Sponsored by husband
Min	39	M	Hong Kong	Grade 9	Fabric Designer	Business Operator	Cantonese English	Fluent Functional	1985	Independent Immigrant
Betsy	26	S	Hong Kong	Grade 12	Sales Clerk	Not Employed	Cantonese English	Fluent Functional	1979	Sponsored by brother
Anne	32	M	Hong Kong	Grade 9	Cashier	Homemaker	Cantonese English	Fluent Limited	1976	Sponsored by brother
Marg	31	M	Hong Kong	Grade 6	Factory Worker	Homemaker	Cantonese English	Fluent Limited	1980	Sponsored by husband
Joni	55	D	Hong Kong	Grade 6	Business Owner	Not Employed	Cantonese English	Fluent Functional	1984	Sponsored by son
Lily	32	M	China	Grade 4	Dance Instructor	Restaurant Manager	Cantonese, Chiuchau English	)Fluent Limited	1983	Independent
Mary	32	M	China	Grade 9	Factory Supervisor	Seamtress, Waitress	Cantonese English	Fluent Limited	1982	Sponsored by husband
Chi	55	M	China	B.Com.	Accountant	Accounting Clerk	Cantonese English	)Fluent	1985	Independent

TABLE II - SELECTED FAMILY DATA ON THE PARTICIPANTS

	No. of Children and Age	Family	Size	Husband's		Father's		Mother's	
		Homeland (Extended	Canada Family--E)	Education	Employment	Education	Employment	Education	Employment
Loi	--	9	5	--	--	Grade 6	Grocery Shop Owner	Grade 6	Grocery Shop Co-owner
Wendy	--	9	11 (E)	--	--	Grade 12	Businessman	Grade 6	Homemaker
Kam	--	13	2	--	--	Grade 12	Fisherman	No Schooling	Homemaker
Jane	Two - 3, 1	9	4	B.Sc.,M.Sc.	Ph.D. Student	Grade 12	Army Sergeant	Grade 6	Homemaker
Sen	--	6	2	B.A., M.A.	Ph.D. Student	Grade 9	Army Colonel	Grade 9	Secretary
Filie	Two - 7, 5	3	4	B.Sc.	Engineer	B.Com.	Businessman	Grade 9	Homemaker
Paula	Two - 6, 4	3	4	B.Sc.	Chemist	Grade 7	Drug Store Owner	Grade 6	Homemaker
Min	Four - 18, 16, 14, 12	7 (E)	6	Grade 12	Contractor	Grade 6	Contractor	No Schooling	Homemaker
Betsy	--	6	10 (E)	--	--	Grade 6	Sales Clerk	Grade 6	Homemaker
Anne	Two - 4, 2	10 (E)	4	B.Sc.	Computer	Grade 2	Restaurant Owner	Grade 12	Restaurant Co-owner
Marg	Two - 4, 1	8 (E)	4	Grade 12	Unemployed Meatpacker	Grade 4	Construction Foreman	Grade 12	Teacher, Homemaker
Joni	Three - 35, 32, 30	2	5	Grade 12	Office Worker	Grade 12	Bank Employee	Grade 10	Homemaker
Lily	One - 11	5 (E)	3	Grade 12	Chinese Music Teacher	No Schooling	Herbalist	No Schooling	Commune Worker
Mary	--	3	4	Grade 12	Janitor	Grade 12	Laundromat Owner	Grade 12	Homemaker, Cashier
Chi	Two - 18, 15	4	4	Technical Diploma	Engineer	Grade 6	Herbalist	Grade 6	Homemaker

to a grade 4 education. Four women had one or two university degree(s) and one had some post-secondary training. Two women had a grade 12 education, four finished grade 9, three other completed grade 6 and one with a grade 4 education. At the time of the interview, nine women were employed, three were not employed and three were full-time homemakers. Their occupations ranged from restaurant worker to sessional lecturer.

The education of their parents varied and was generally lower than the participants' attainment. Fathers' education ranged from no formal education to a university degree. Mother's education varied from no formal education to post-secondary training. The husbands' education levels, which ranged from a grade 12 education to a graduate degree, were generally higher than those of the women.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the participants' backgrounds and their educational involvement. Each participant's information is summarized in a two- or three-paragraph profile which begins with a poetic excerpt chosen by the researcher. The use of the excerpts represents the researcher's understanding and interpretation of each individual's general life experience or their particular attitude toward education and/or adaptation. In all cases, the participants' names have been changed to protect their anonymity. The profiles are classified into three groups that represent different levels of educational involvement. They are presented in the rank order of the activity levels; high, moderate, and low.

Group One - High Participation

(Sen, Chi, Min, Loi and Kam)

To set them apart from the other two groups, the pseudonyms chosen for this group are all monosyllabic oriental names. Their length of stay in Canada varies from 1 to 6 years with an average stay of 3 years. They have taken part in three to eight hours of formal educational activities per week and have averaged at least five months of part-time learning in each of the years they have lived in Canada. All five were engaged in some learning endeavours at the time of data collection.

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
(Alfred Tennyson)

SEN is a 29-year-old married woman, born and raised in Taiwan. Both of her parents have a Grade 9 education. Her father is a colonel in the army, and her mother works as a secretary for the government. Sen has three siblings, all of whom are university trained. Sen has a B.A. from Taiwan, where she was a junior high school teacher for two years. In August of 1982 she immigrated to Canada, sponsored by her husband, a Canadian student living in Taiwan. In order to pursue further studies in English she moved to Edmonton alone, in 1982, while her husband remained in Taiwan to complete his education.

Sen received her M.A. in 1985. The same year she was reunited with her husband who is now a graduate student at the university. Since her graduation, Sen has been working as a sessional instructor at the university where she is also studying part-time toward a doctoral degree.

No man is an island, entire of itself
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
(John Donne)

CHI is a 55-year-old married woman, born in China. She moved to Hong Kong at the age of six. Both of her parents completed Grade 6. Her father works as a Chinese herbalist, and her mother is a homemaker. Chi is the oldest of four children. Her brother is a city planner in Edmonton where he completed a Master's degree. Her two other siblings, a brother and a sister, are both high school graduates who work and live in Hong Kong. Her husband, who was born in China, is a retired structural engineer, trained in Hong Kong.

Chi has a business degree and worked as an accountant for more than 25 years. Uncertain of the political future in Hong Kong, she and her husband retired from their positions and immigrated to Canada in August of 1985 as independent immigrants. Presently she lives with her husband, a daughter aged eighteen, and a son aged fifteen.

Chi is currently employed as an accounting clerk. The strong desire to become socially integrated has prompted Chi to upgrade her language skills. Since her arrival in Edmonton, she has taken ESL courses at St. Catherine's School for three months and at the Faculty of Extension for six months. At the time of the interview, she was attending ESL classes organized by the Chinese students at the university on

Saturday mornings. She has also participated in some computer training workshops run by the university.

That was her song, for she was the maker.
(Wallace Stevens)

MIN is a 39-year-old married woman from Hong Kong. Her father, a construction contractor, did not go past Grade 6. Her mother, a homemaker who is no longer alive, received no formal education. Min is the only child in the family. Her husband, who was born and who completed Grade 12 in China, operated a profitable contracting business in Hong Kong. Mindful of the future of her four children, ages twelve to eighteen, Min and her family immigrated to Canada as independent immigrants in 1985.

Disinterested in a rigid and traditional school system, Min quit school at Grade 9. She then worked for a textile company, where she became a chief pattern designer within two years. After her marriage she helped run her husband's business.

In preparation for the move to Canada, Min took an ESL course from the British Council in Hong Kong. Having some English proficiency, Min acts as the "language broker" between her family and the English-speaking world. As well, she oversees the administrative aspect of the family-owned renovation business. Soon after her arrival in Edmonton, she took some ESL classes at St. Hilda's School. At the time of data collection she was taking evening ESL classes at AVC.

> In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
> But westward, look, the land is bright.
> (Arthur H. Clough)

LOI is a 30-year-old single woman of Chinese descent, born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam. Her parents, both of whom have the equivalent of a Grade 6 education, were schooled in China. Loi is the third of seven children. She arrived in Edmonton in December of 1983. As a new immigrant she was sponsored by her eldest brother who had been living in Edmonton since 1979. She now lives with three sisters and one brother. Due to illness, her mother decided to stay in Saigon where her father and two younger brothers still live. All of Loi's siblings have completed high school but have not gone any further, largely due to the political upheaval in Vietnam. Loi quit school at Grade 12 and subsequently undertook some clerical training.

Loi worked in an office for four years before moving to Canada. Currently, she works as a handbag maker in a factory, a job she has held since 1984. She took evening ESL classes at Victoria High School soon after she arrived. Later, she enrolled in the evening ESL programme at AVC. Discontented with her present job, Loi is hoping to upgrade her education for a prospective career change.

> For almost roaming with a hungry heart
> Much have I seen and known-cities of men
> And manners, climates...
> (Alfred Tennyson)

KAM is a 37-year-old single woman of Chinese descent from Vietnam. Her father was a high school graduate, and her mother received no formal education. Kam's parents passed away when she was a young child. She is the second of four children, all of whom were raised by their maternal grandparents. Two of her brothers have a Grade 9 education while the other is a high school graduate. Two of them live and work in Hong Kong while the youngest brother, a maintenance worker, lives with her.

Due to her family situation, Kam had to quit school after Grade 6. She and her brother fled Vietnam, spending one year in a refugee camp in Thialand, before arriving in Montreal in 1980 as refugees. They stayed briefly in Regina with their sponsors. With hardly any personal belongings they moved to Edmonton the same year to seek work. Since settling in Edmonton, she intermittently has taken part-time ESL classes at Victoria High School. In 1984, she completed a citizenship course with the Chinese Benevolent Society. She has been attending evening ESL classes at AVC since 1984. Recently, Kam resigned from her job as a cook helper to apply for admission to a government assisted, full-time ESL programme.

Group Two - Moderate Participation

(Filie, Paula, Betsy, Joni, Lily, Mary and Wendy)

The pseudonyms of these seven individuals are two-syllable western names. Their length of stay in Canada ranges from 2 to 9 years with an average stay of 5.1 years. These women have a participation record which averages at least two months of part-time involvement in each of the years they have resided in Canada. The actual instructional time they received ranges from three to eight hours per week. Four of the seven women are now involved in learning.

> That nothing walks with aimless feet,
> Or cast as rubbish void.
> (Alfred Tennyson)

FILIE is a 35-year-old married woman from Hong Kong. Her father, a university graduate from Shanghai, runs a trading company in Hong Kong. Her mother, a homemaker, has a Grade 9 education. Filie is the youngest of six children, all of whom have completed a university education. Filie obtained a business degree from Taiwan where she lived and studied for seven years. In April of 1977, she emigrated from Hong Kong, sponsored by her husband who is an electrical engineer trained in Canada. Filie was employed as a business assistant in Hong Kong but worked as a secretary for four years in Edmonton.

Filie now lives with her husband, a son aged seven, and a daughter aged five. In 1977, she enrolled in two courses credited toward a certified general accountant designation. For personal interest, she took several courses in early childhood development in 1981, at Grant MacEwan College. She started volunteering as a Chinese teacher, in 1982, for a community group. This involvement connected her with the two part-time jobs she now holds, one as a Chinese language instructor and another as a teacher's aide. Since joining the Public School Board she has participated in several in-service seminars. In 1983, she has also taken two university credit courses on language acquisition.

> I can but trust that good shall fall
> At last--far off--at last
> (Alfred Tennyson)

PAULA is a 39-year-old married woman, born and raised in Hong Kong. Her father has a Grade 7 education and is the owner of a Chinese drug store. Her mother, a housewife, has not gone beyond Grade 6. Paula is the only child in her family. She met and married her husband who is a chemist and who was trained in Canada. Sponsored by her husband, Paula moved to Canada in 1977 and now lives with her husband and two sons, aged six and four.

Paula has a Grade 12 education and one year of secretarial training. In Hong Kong she had held jobs such as receptionist, airline ticket agent and executive secretary. Her first employment in Canada was an office job in Virden, Manitoba. After moving to Fort Saskatchewan in 1982, she was employed as a secretary. At the time of the study she was working as a secretary on a temporary, part-time basis. In Virden, Paula took piano lessons as well as cooking and crocheting courses. She also participated in some company sponsored in-service training. In 1984 she took a course in French through Athabasca University. In 1985, from Alberta College and Grant MacEwan College she took a few courses in word processing, a field which she may pursue in the near future. With no particular area of interest in mind, she is also thinking of starting university sometime in the future in order to fulfill a life-long dream.

> Piece by piece I seem to re-enter the world.
> (Adrienne Rich)

BETSY is a 26-year-old single woman from Hong Kong. Both of her parents have approximately a Grade 6 education. Her father, a former sales clerk, is now retired. Her mother is a homemaker who has never worked outside her home. Betsy is the fourth of five children in her family, which immigrated to Canada in 1979, sponsored by a brother who has been here since 1971. Except for her eldest brother who has some university training, all of her other siblings have not gone beyond Grade 12.

Betsy, who lives with her family, has a grade 12 education. In Hong Kong she had held jobs such as factory worker and sales clerk. When she first arrived in Edmonton in 1979, she took several high school courses at Victoria High School, but discontinued her efforts after six months. In 1985 she registered at NAIT in a bookkeeping course from which she later withdrew. For the past six years, she has been employed as a restaurant worker. Immensely dissatisfied with her job and station in life, Betsy has begun to rethink her life-goals. Recently she terminated her job with the restaurant and subsequently took a key-punching course, financed by the Manpower Office. In addition, she took a word-processing course from Alberta College. She is now taking ESL classes at AVC in the evenings.

I am a part of all that I have met...
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust with unburnished, not to shine in sea.
(Alfred Tennyson)

JONI is a 55-year-old divorced woman, born and raised in Hong Kong. Both of her parents are deceased. Her father had completed high school and her mother also received some high school education. Joni is the third of four children in her family. Her older brother and two sisters all had a university education or post-secondary training.

Joni emigrated from Hong Kong in November of 1984, sponsored by her son with whose family she now lives. With the outbreak of the Second World War, Joni's education was disrupted at Grade 6. She worked as a salesperson for over twenty years before running her own gift shop which she closed down shortly before leaving Hong Kong. She is not presently employed but is very involved in a number of activities organized by a Chinese church of which she is a member. Joni has been attending ESL classes, organized by the Chinese students at the university, on Saturdays, since the summer of 1986. She also takes part in the "Changing Together" programme offered by the Immigrant Women's Centre as a part of her plan to build a second career within the next two years.

Made weak by time and fate but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.
(Alfred Tennyson)

LILY is a 32-year-old woman, born in China, which she left for Hong Kong at the age of seven, with her father. Both her parents came from extremely poor families which could not afford to give them a formal education. Lily is the eldest of three children. Her brother and sister both live in China. Her brother completed Grade 12 while her sister managed to finish Grade 6. As independent immigrants, Lily and her husband emigrated from Hong Kong in October of 1983. She now lives with her husband and an eleven-year-old son. Her husband has the equivalent of a high school education and is an instructor of Chinese operatic arts.

Lily has a Grade 4 education. Out of necessity, she started working in a factory at the age of eleven. By age thirteen, she became an apprentice to a Chinese opera group. Later, she became a dance instructor but she also worked as a factory supervisor, actress and broadcaster on a part-time basis. Since her arrival in Edmonton, she has run a grocery store and is presently working for a Chinese restaurant. Shortly after her arrival, she attended ESL classes briefly at Alex Taylor School and AVC. Due to an irregular work schedule, she was put on an ESL Home Tutor programme, administered by AVC, for a short period. Since the summer of 1986, she has been attending ESL classes at St. Catherine's

School on a part-time basis and hopes to upgrade her education in the future.

> The sea of faith was once, too,
> at the full, and round earth's shore.
> (Matthew Arnold)

MARY is a 32-year-old married woman from China. Her parents both completed high school. Her father passed away when she was a young child. Her mother, once a housewife, worked as a cashier after her husband's death. Mary is the youngest of three children. As young students, Mary and her siblings all lived through the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. Her brother and sister managed to complete Grade 12. Mary moved to Edmonton in 1982, immediately after her marriage. She was sponsored by her husband who moved to Canada in 1977. A former mechanic with a Grade 12 education from China, her husband now works as a janitor. Mary now lives with her husband as well as her mother and brother, both of whom emigrated from China in 1985.

Mary once had high hopes for her academic future. Unfortunately her formal schooling came to an abrupt end at Grade 9, at the outset of the Cultural Revolution. She was assigned to work in a garment factory where she eventually became a line supervisor. Mary now holds two jobs, one as a restaurant worker and the other as a seamstress. She has taken ESL classes on a part-time basis for almost a year. She is not presently pursuing any learning activities because of the combined pressure of family and job responsibilities.

> I wake to sleep and take my waking slow.
> I learn by going where I have to go.
> (Theodore Roethke)

WENDY is a 32-year-old single woman from Vietnam. She was born in Cambodia where the volatile political situation forced the resettlement of her family to Vietnam in 1966. Her father, who has a high school education, was a highly successful businessman who is now retired. Her mother, a housewife, has a Grade 6 education. Wendy is the eldest of seven children in her family, which immigrated to Edmonton in 1984. They were sponsored by Wendy's younger brother, an electrician who has been living in Edmonton since 1982. Wendy's three other siblings completed high school in Vietnam and hold various semi-skilled jobs. Two younger siblings are attending high school. She lives with her family of eleven, including a sister-in-law and a nephew.

A lack of interest in learning had led Wendy to drop out of school after Grade 9. Being comfortably provided for by her family, she stayed home for several years. She eventually worked for two years in the family business which was drastically reduced in size to comply with strict Communist regulations. With the loss of her family fortune, she started to rethink her direction in life. Since moving to Canada in 1984, she has been working as a seamtress. Trying to overcome the language barrier, in the spring of 1986 she began taking ESL classes at AVC after work.

Group Three - Low Participation

(Jane, Anne and Marg)

These three were assigned westernized monosyllabic pseudonyms. Their length of stay in Canada ranges from 4 to 10 years with an average stay of 6.7 years. They all have a relatively low participation level. All participants have, on average, no more than one month of educational activity in each of the years they have lived in Canada. The actual instructional hours for this group differs from three to eight hours per week. Only one woman is now pursuing some learning activities.

> It is a boat longing for the sea
> And yet afraid
> (Edgar Lee Masters)

JANE is a 31-year-old married woman from Taiwan. Her father, a high school graduate, is an army sergeant. Her mother, a housewife, has a Grade 6 education. Jane is the fifth of seven children, all of whom have completed university. She holds a degree in business from Taiwan where she once worked in the area of sales. In 1981 she reunited with her husband in Alabama where he had been working toward a master's degree following their marriage in Taiwan in 1980. Upon the completion of his studies, they moved to Toronto in 1982 as independent immigrants. In 1984, they moved to Edmonton, where her husband is pursuing a doctoral programme in engineering.

Jane, a homemaker, now lives with her husband and two children, a son aged three and a daughter aged one. While in Alabama, she took some ESL classes as well as cooking classes organized by the students' wives. For a few months in 1982, she took part in a data processing training sponsored by the Manpower Office in Toronto. Since then she has not been involved in any formal learning projects. Discontented with her current role, Jane has been contemplating the possibilities for further education and a career. She is, however, unsure of her own abilities.

> I am a word in a foreign language.
> (Margaret Atwood)

ANNE is a 32-year-old married woman, born and raised in Hong Kong. Her father, who died when Anne was a teenager, had two years of formal schooling. Her mother, a high school graduate, helped run her husband's successful restaurant business before his death. Anne is the second of four children in her family, which immigrated to Edmonton in 1976. Her eldest brother, a university graduate, is a computer programmer. Both her sisters graduated from high school in Hong Kong and are now homemakers. Anne's husband is a computer analyst with a degree in computing science.

Anne, who has a Grade 9 education, worked as a cashier in her family's restaurant after quitting school. She also worked as a housekeeper for nearly four years in Edmonton. She stopped working since her first child was born. For several months, during her first year in Edmonton, she took some day-time ESL classes at Victoria High School. Living primarily within a Chinese circle for the past ten years, Anne saw little incentive to improve her English. However, she starts taking a Chinese course through the Taiwan Overseas Correspondence School recently. In anticipation of re-entering the workforce in the next few years, she is now studying English at home through the use of instructional tapes.

You are the brave who do not break.
(Raymond R. Patterson)

MARG is a 31-year-old married woman from Hong Kong. Her father finished Grade 4 and works as a construction foreman. Her mother, who passed away in 1979, was a teacher turned housewife. Marg is the third of five children. Her older brother and sister completed Grade 12 in Hong Kong where her younger sister and brother attend high school. After her marriage in 1980, Marg immigrated to Canada sponsored by her husband. He is a high school graduate from China who moved to Canada in the 1970s. Due to a work-related injury, he is presently unemployed.

Financial hardship forced Marg to quit school after Grade 6, and she eventually found work in a factory. She is now a homemaker. A car accident in 1982 has left her crippled. Currently, she lives with her husband, a son aged four and a daughter aged one. During her first year here, Marg received some one-to-one tutoring in English. In 1986, she was also involved, for three months, in the ESL Home Tutor programme offered by AVC. Presently she is awaiting arrangements to enter a daytime ESL programme as a first step of her plan to find employment outside the home.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The major analytical operation in the study involved searching for common themes in the collected data. Using a thematic approach, the data were grouped under three major categories: personal, socio-cultural, and educational factors. Within each major category, a number of sub-themes identified from the data were presented to illustrate the participants' educational and/or adjustment experiences. Since every sub-theme has the potential to have either facilitating or inhibiting effects on learning activities and/or adaptation, each sub-theme is examined from both perspectives.

Personal Factors

English proficiency, employment, family dynamics and personality are the four aspects to be explored under this category. The core of the language issue was the participants' perception of their English proficiency level which, in turn, influenced their economic and social adjustment. Their employment experiences, past and present, were examined to explore the relationship to their occupational adjustment. Family factors, such as birth order, family size and components, and relationships with family members add another dimension to the participants' lived world. Finally, a more detailed portrayal of these women's lives is offered through a discussion of their characteritics. The examination of these factors offers a good indication of the major adjustment problems they have faced and the role education has played in their lives as immigrants.

English Proficiency

Inadequate English was a very real and recurrent problem for most participants. In general, three levels of English proficiency were evident among the fifteen women. Five of the women felt confident of their communicative competency in English, four felt that they had a command of English sufficient only to handle limited social interactions, and six felt that they had minimal command of English.

The ones who had the most facility in English were also the most educated. Of the five women who were comfortable with their English ability, Chi was the one who actively pursued some language training in an attempt to become more involved in the new environment. Succinctly, Chi explained her reason for learning English:

> I don't want to cut myself off from the new environment. I want to be involved and I know I have enough English to cope with everyday life, but Life is not just shopping or superficial socializing.

Paula, Sen, Jane and Filie also displayed some degree of social integration, in that they maintained circles of

Canadian friends. All five were, or had been at one time or another, involved in some job-related training or post-secondary educational pursuit in Canada.

Loi, Joni, Min and Betsy all had some social fluency in English. However, Min was the only one within the group to have some regular interaction with English speakers, mostly her customers with whom she dealt regularly. Anxious to improve her communication skills, Min was very committed to her English training in order to manage her business more efficiently. Loi, Joni and Betsy were extremely eager to upgrade their language capabilities to a level where they could either improve their job performance or pursue some job skills training. Loi disclosed the language problem with which she had to grapple:

> I want to perform better on my job so that I can understand all the things my supervisor says to me...For example, I have to ask my boss for a raise. I can't rely on someone to do it for me; I have to talk to her myself. The boss doesn't like it when someone else is speaking for me.

Minimal command of English was a source of constant frustration for Kam, Wendy, Marg, Lily, Mary and Anne who were all fairly articulate in their own language. They believed that their English proficiency was limited, to the extent that their integration into the mainstream of society was severely impeded. Wendy, Mary and Marg respectively talked about their predicament:

> Not until I came here did I realize that I am a very useless person. I can't speak English

> properly. I live a very limited life. I have very few friends and very limited activities.
>
> If something out of the ordinary happens in our household, something that requires me to use English, I just don't know how to cope with it.
>
> I can't go out and look for a job. I can't fill out those long application forms. If they interview me in English, I will not understand them.

However, all six of them indicated that a desire or necessity to communicate with others in English had motivated them to undertake various language learning activities. Somehow, for those like Kam and Wendy who could speak three or four languages, their eagerness to fill a social need is evidenced by Kam's remarks:

> The language barrier really makes me feel uneasy. Back home, I used to talk to a lot of people because I could speak four different languages. I just have a desire to learn to speak English well enough to make some Canadian friends, to let them understand me. I would be very satisfied if I could do that.

Even the five participants who were relatively comfortable with their English ability nevertheless related some initial language difficulties with their academic pursuits. Jane apparently had some degree of social fluency, but she was less sure of her academic English. The first and only formal educational attempt she made four years back in Toronto was, as she said, far from being a success. Since then she had not been involved in any formal learning activity. A feeling of tentativeness permeated the description of her initial educational experience:

> But it was a few years ago and I am not sure. I only got B's and C's. This was actually the first time I had entered a training programme outside of Taiwan. Actually, I was quite ashamed of the marks I got.

Mary, on the other hand, had minimal English proficiency and was struggling to function in an English-speaking world. In an implicit way, Mary indicated that her withdrawal from language training was due, in part, to extreme self-consciousness of her inadequate English. Her self-doubt had created a kind of approach/avoidance conflict. She said:

> I know I can't change my life without learning more English. But I find it threatening to work in a place where I am the only Chinese, because I feel very lonely and isolated...It is true, if I have more contact with Canadians I can at least pick up some English. I can still remember there were times when I worked in the factory, I had to use all kinds of gestures to make myself understood. To me it was an extremely awkward and embarrassing moment.

Although a limited command of English was a serious barrier in their adjustment process, for some it virtually became a catalyst for their involvement in continuing education. Ten women were determined to remove the language barrier by becoming actively involved in language training. Two women, who were less self-assured, regardless of their education and competency levels, were relatively moderate in their commitment to formal learning activities.

Employment Scenario

Fourteen participants had held full-time jobs in their homelands. Their employment spectrum ranged from professional positions, such as teacher and accountant, to lower status positions, such as cashier and sewing machine operator. Their length of employment varied from one to thirty years. Two operated their own businesses, twelve were employed by others, and one never worked outside her home.

Since their arrival in Canada, nine were currently employed in jobs ranging from sessional instructor to restaurant worker. The length of their employment varied from one to six years. Three other participants were homemakers with young children, and an additional three were not currently employed. One participant ran a business, along with her husband, one other held two jobs, and one worked only on a part-time, temporary basis.

Of those who found that their previous employment had been helpful in establishing themselves in Canada, four were from Hong Kong and had used English in their work place to varying degrees. For a period of more than ten years, Paula and Chi had worked with a number of western colleagues with whom they interacted on a frequent and regular basis. Consequently, they had little problem adjusting to the new working environment. For several years Joni and Min were required to use English while conducting their business in Hong Kong. These previous interactions with westerners seemed to have had some positive influence on their perception of their own English fluency. It helped them to understand, to some degree, the western culture and way of life.

Sen, Filie and Jane all believed that their previous employment experience was valuable. Sen stated that her teaching experience and knowledge of Chinese had helped her to find a teaching position here. It had also helped define her plan for further studies. As she remarked:

> I enjoy studying Chinese and English. Ever since Grade 9, I had decided to study both. I enjoy the fact that I can combine my interest with my profession. My goal is to gain an advanced degree in this field.

Though not employed in a position that reflected her previous job responsibilities and training, Filie felt that a business degree helped secure her first job in Canada as an accounting clerk. However, she found that knowing different Chinese dialects and having taught as a volunteer in Canada were instrumental in moving her into the teaching profession. Currently a homemaker, Jane speculated that her business background might be beneficial if she were to look for employment or further her study in this field.

Though they were not currently employed, Jane, Anne, Betsy, Kam, Marg and Joni had launched some fruitful attempts to better their positions. The availability of a home computer had prompted Jane to learn to use the machine on her own. Apparently, she had developed an interest in this area. In Anne's case, she committed herself to volunteer work in a Sunday school and a day care centre, where she could interact with English-speaking children. This, she claimed, was a very non-threatening and effective way of "brushing up" on the language. In addition, she also used some self-study tapes to learn more English. Marg scanned daily the headlines of an English newspaper and frequently watched some children's television programmes on an English channel in order to learn some English. Having retired from her business, Joni occupied her time with numerous social and learning activities. Betsy and Kam both terminated their employment, which they regarded as dead-end positions, in order to apply for government subsidies to enter some full-time, long-term language and job skills training, which they hoped would lead to an improved career path.

Eight participants had held unskilled or semi-skilled positions in their home countries. They all stated that working in an exclusively Chinese environment had not helped them to adjust to life here, let alone find satisfactory employment. The reality was best captured by Marg's description:

> When I worked in Hong Kong, my whole environment was Chinese, there was hardly any need to use English at all. Since I came here, I found the most demanding task was to speak English...I could live a fairly normal life in Hong Kong without having to study any English. After all, it was a Chinese world that I lived in over there.

Six women were unhappy with their employment situations. They held menial or unskilled positions, their employment circle never went beyond a restaurant, a garment factory or a hotel laundry room. All of them complained about the low wages and poor working conditions. They felt that they were locked into jobs which had virtually no future prospects. Kam's observation was representative of this group's particular situation:

> I never really had to use English all that much at work. There was always a group of Chinese around the place I worked. That's why I ended up working in a Chinese restaurant for four years; because I didn't have to use English there...But, I want to get something better, something I can use some English. If you can speak a bit of English, you can get a job that is better paid.

Jane and Marg found that being full-time homemakers had made economic and social integration into the mainstream of society all the more difficult. Both felt alienated from the world beyond their homes, and Jane likened her restricted life space to being "trapped in a cage." The ambivalence and doubt about her current role was evident in the following remarks:

> As planned, we started a family three years after we got married. And we both felt that we should bring up our kids in a perfectly good home environment. Well, I have friends who work and put their kids in a day care. These kids learn a lot more than mine. The older one is three but he can only speak in single words. Other kids are speaking in sentences...Back in 1980, I was working in Taiwan, I felt satisfied and proud of my job. Now, I feel depressed because I stay with two kids all the time--their screaming and shouting, you know.

In brief, those who used English on their jobs before immigration adjusted better occupationally and socially while those who held menial jobs here were dissatisfied with their employment, and the homemakers felt socially isolated.

Family Dynamics

Three important aspects of the participants' family realities -- birth order, their family component, and their relationship with various family members -- offer a clearer picture of how these different factors impacted on their educational destiny.

1. Birth Order

Two women indicated that birth order in their families might have had a positive influence on their education in the past.

Paula indicated that, as an only child, her parents' concern over her educational future saw her react in a highly receptive way by being more responsible for her own learning activities. She saw the attention she got as an only child as a positive force in her educational experience. Filie, as the youngest of six children in her family, remarked that the example set by her five older siblings made it natural for her to follow in their footsteps to obtain a university education, which she asserted was of great value to her.

In contrast, two participants hinted, either explicitly or implicitly, that their specific birth order might have been one of the major factors that restricted their educational choices.

Min explained that, as she was the only child in her family and "spoiled" by her parents, she was able to persuade her parents to accept her decision to drop out of school at

Grade 9. This, in essence, had a significant impact on her life. She later mentioned that her level of English would have been better if only she had had more schooling.

Joni felt that being the middle child in the family had put her in a disadvantaged position in two respects. First, her older siblings were able to complete high school shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. On the other hand, since she was six years their junior, she had to terminate her education at Grade 6 when the war broke out. Further, she was called upon to shoulder most of the family responsibilities because her older siblings worked outside the home and her younger sister was too young to share the duties with her.

2. Family Component

In general, single women were able to allot more time to their educational activities. Of the five women who were single, Loi and Kam were able to devote more time to learning activities. This seemed to hold true with the situation of Wendy, Betsy and Joni, all of whom lived with their extended families, who shared household chores to accommodate their learning endeavours.

Those who were married and had pre-school-aged children, found it extremely difficult to cope with various family responsibilities and learning activities. The responsibilities of running households and caring for their children had not been easy tasks for Anne, Marg and Jane, who were full-time homemakers with two young pre-school children each. Often, the role of major care-giver in a nuclear family setting had a restricting effect on what they could do in terms of their own development. Such a dilemma was reflected in Anne's comments:

> I want to work only part-time or just between nine and three, so I can spend most of the time with them when they are out of school. I think it would be too tough to handle a full-time job with two kids around...I am not one of those superwomen, I don't think I can manage all these.

A similar problem confronted Lily, Paula, Min and Filie, who had to maintain a delicate balance among the many roles they had to fill as homemakers, wives, mothers and income contributors. Quite often, their own educational needs had to be compromised. This disruption was indicated through Lily's assessment of her own situation:

> I guess, with the job situation and the family responsibility, I had to study on an on-and-off basis for a long time.

Generally speaking, single women who lived with their extended families elicited more support for their learning activities from various family members than those who were married, with young children to care for.

3. Family Relationship

Nine women found that their family members accommodated, in some very special ways, their educational needs.

Sen, Anne and Chi all indicated that their husbands had a supportive attitude toward their educational pursuits. Chi's husband's approval was expressed in the form of the sharing of household duties. Anne's husband's cooperation came mainly in the form of moral and emotional assistance. And Sen's husband's support came in a most comprehensive way:

> My husband is also very supportive. He, himself, is a student for so many years, and he always encourages me to go further. He is very understanding and shares most of the household chores and tries to make things easier for me.

Both Chi and Min declared that their teen-aged children had given them a great deal of cooperation by learning to do their share of household chores and, in some cases, preparing their own meals. Loi and Kam found that their brothers had been a constant source of support by providing them with relevant educational information as well as with transportation to and from their training location. Joni's source of support came from her adult son who encouraged her to get actively involved in various kinds of learning activities. Betsy's parent's approval came in a passive form of non-verbal acceptance of her current educational activities.

Conversely, two participants felt that some family members had, in fact, distracted them from such activities. Filie and Jane felt that, at times, their husbands' expectations and perceptions of them as principally homemakers and major nurturers was at odds with their desire for self-improvement. This type of conflict frequently manifested itself in a subtle and indirect way, as was unfolded in Filie's account:

> My husband always says that I should take it easy and not take on so many things. Perhaps for the next year or two, I will take some courses in swimming or skating so that I can do these things with my kids as a family. In a few years' time, I'll be able to do something for myself, get some retraining and new ideas to improve myself.

Personality

In the process of discussing their experiences, and in revealing their ways of handling various adaptation problems and educational issues, a portrait of these women's personalities gradually began to take shape. The ensuing discussion offers some explanation as to why some women behaved in a specific manner in a particular context.

1. Independence/Dependence

Six participants displayed a sense of independence which was much stronger than the others. Having lived with their parents until their marriages, Filie, Paula and Jane coped with a number of new roles in a new culture with some degree of control even in the absence of a support network during the early settling phase. They drew on their own resources to tackle various adjustment problems. Paula recalled her own experience:

> When I first moved to Virden, to me it was such a small town. There wasn't another Chinese family in sight in that whole community. I guess, I

had no choice but to use English to get by.

By comparison, Joni, Chi and Sen had available a well-grounded support network, which they chose to use as a source of information without becoming overly dependent on it. Joni's experience was typical among members of this group:

> I live with my son and daughter-in-law and they have made life easier for me. But I don't want to rely on them all the time. They have their jobs and their lives to lead...I like to go out by myself, do my own shopping, take the bus to school and make some new friends.

Though hampered by a lack of English fluency, Min, Lily, Loi and Kam still projected a certain sense of independence by seeking out some necessary employment and educational information on their own volition. The language barrier did not undermine their desire to be independent. As Kam recounted her experience:

> When we first came, we had nothing but some bowls and a few pairs of chopsticks. We were just like some illiterates. It was hard for us to get established...I kept reading the Chinese papers and notices...Finaly, I went out and got some help from a Chinese agency.

Betsy displayed an emerging sense of independence by becoming more responsible for her own learning activities. Mary and Marg, on the other hand, found that they were forced to take on a dependent role by their lack of English competency. Anne and Marg readily offered their side of the story:

> The first few months here I was like a deaf

> mute. All I could remember were the 26 letters of alphabet...Even now, I am very dependent on my husband. I only go out if he is around with me.
>
> I didn't know my way around and I didn't dare to go out. Even if I wanted to go out I had to depend on others to take me out. I had very little control over that. It would be easier if I was able to ask for directions. The fact was I didn't know how to ask for directions in English.

Shielded by their families' protective attitude well into their adulthood, Wendy and Anne were extremely dependent on others to make major decisions for them. Anne thoughtfully assessed her own situation:

> My mother was a very competent and traditional woman. She looked after us very well; so I was very dependent on her all along...You know, even with my marriage; my mother sort of arranged it for me. I didn't really know what marriage was all about. Looking back, I think it was a very precarious way to lead a life.

2. Confidence/Diffidence

Filie and Paula both exuded a sense of confidence in their English, professional skills, and adjustment to the new country. Shortly after arrival, they obtained jobs related to their previous training which enhanced their job performance. As Paula recalled:

> Having worked in Hong Kong, I found working here was a lot easier. The jobs that I had in Hong Kong were very demanding, but here in Canada things moved at a much slower pace, so it was not a matter of gearing up but gearing down.

Sen was obviously confident of her ability when she made the decision to pursue further studies in a country whose academic tradition and culture were different from hers.

Their previous work experience or professional training seemed to have boosted the confidence of Chi, Jane, Joni and Min. They were more prepared to interact with native speakers at least on a social level. Betsy and Loi, however, displayed an element of doubt about their own ability in handling educational activities other than language training.

Inadequate English had eroded the confidence of at least five women so much that three of them -- Anne, Mary and Marg -- found that day-to-day communication like answering a telephone call or communicating with a neighbour was virtually a test of personal courage. Vividly, Anne and Marg described their apprehension:

> I don't like going out to my own backyard. I am afraid that my neighbour will start talking to me. I become very nervous and start stuttering as if a ton of stones is in my mouth.
>
> I don't know how my English would work with a total stranger. Every time the phone rings, I am afraid to answer it. You know, there were always some salesman who would phone and rattle on a mile a minute, I just didn't understand what they said. All I could say was, "Sorry, I don't know." and hung up.

Lily, Anne, Marg, Mary and Wendy all stated a strong reluctance to speak English in the presence of people whose mother tongue was Chinese. This implied that they were extremely self-conscious of their English proficiency. Lily candidly revealed her social predicament:

> I would force myself to speak English when there was a roomful of foreigners present. On the other hand, if there were one single Chinese present, I would feel tongue-tied. I simply find it

> extremely embarrassing to speak English in front of a Chinese.

3. Determination/Tentativeness

Lily's tenacious attempts to overcome her language problems suited the words she used to describe herself:

> I often encourage myself by rationalizing that I am entitled to everything in this world if I am determined enough. Let's say if there is a high, magnificent building in front of me, I am entitled to climb the steps and appreciate what's inside it. I may be too old or too weak to climb all the way to the top, but at least I can climb as many steps as I possibly can...I am what you would call a 'fighter'. I never like to admit defeat.

Not unlike Lily, Kam and Wendy were determined to seize every available opportunity to improve their English. Sen's determination to accomplish an educational goal was proven by her decision to study abroad even without the company of her husband. Chi's determination was proven by the effort she put forth to obtain a high school diploma after eight years of part-time studies immediately following the Second World War. Later, she also successfully struggled through a demanding work/study schedule to complete a university education. Working full-time presently, she still found time to take English and other job-related courses.

Betsy was not as determined to accomplish her goal in the initial stage, as she dropped out of two earlier attempts to upgrade her education. Similar to Betsy, Mary realized that language training was essential to her future development, but in face of various barriers lacked the perseverance to follow through with the educational activity she had initiated.

4. Extrovert/Introvert

Loi, Joni and Filie showed the most distinct trait of an open, extroverted individual who took the initiative to ask and respond to questions in various situations. Loi described her behaviour in language classes:

> I have been singled out more than once as the one who is most talkative in class. I don't mean I talk a lot but I'll do that if it is necessary.

At the other end of the scale, Betsy, Wendy, Mary and Anne were individuals who were much less outgoing and were more hesitant about taking risks and reaching out. Generally, they reported as having a very limited social circle. As Anne said:

> I don't like going out of the house all that much. Even though I can drive, I don't like going out at all. Except for doing the necessary shopping, I would rather stay home.

5. Reflectiveness

Filie, Lily, Anne and Sen all displayed a highly reflective approach to life in general. Their ability to critically analyze various issues and problems led to the discovery of a number of insights related to their life situations. Lily, in particular, explained in detail the origin of such an attitude:

> I read somewhere about the art of questioning. That without questioning there would be no

> learning. I like to ask questions whenever there is something that I don't understand. And I like to think through a lot of my own problems.

Putting her life in perspective, Filie thoughtfully assessed her adjustment experience:

> I think working somehow helped me cope with living here. I mean the job, the people contact helped. The mistake I made was trying too many things, all at one time...Just imagine the kind of stress I put myself through, a new city, a new culture, a new job, a new study environment, a new marriage and a new type of home life. Everything was new to me and it all happened in a span of three months, right after I came.

6. Resilience

In spite of the debilitating injury she suffered from a car accident, Marg was able to face up to reality without displaying a sense of self-pity. Similarly, Lily who had had an extremely deprived childhood had a long history of rebounding from various adversities as she casually described one of such incident which did not seem to have broken her spirit:

> We bought a grocery business shortly after we arrived. We didn't know then that when we checked the stocks which were turned over to us we should have checked the expiry dates too. As a result, we bought a lot of outdated goods from the previous owner. We lost a lot of money on this deal but it doesn't matter; the important thing is we learn from that experience.

Thirteen women displayed some clear-cut characteristics that appeared to have special relevance to their educational endeavours in a positive way. The few who possessed two or more positive traits also showed a more determined attitude in furthering their learning activities. However, five women showed some characteristics that in combination with other personal situations might have negatively affected their adjustment and educational experience.

Socio-Cultural Factors

An examination of two socio-cultural factors such as economic status and political forces contributes to a better understanding of how the participants' educational experiences were affected within the context of various social and historical influences. A further exploration of factors such as support systems and social/cultural values explains how their backgrounds and culture influenced their adjustment to the new country.

Economic Status

While twelve of the participants had a middle-class upbringing, three other participants were raised in a working-class background. Following arrival in Canada, eight participants maintained their middle-class living standards while seven others had a low-income status.

Filie, Jane, Sen, Paula and Chi, all with post-secondary training, were raised in comfortable, middle-class families, where their parents offered them extensive financial and moral support to do well in school. Filie recounted a major aspect of her parents' involvement in her past education:

> I had some private English tutors all through my high school and university years...My family was not too hard up, so my parents were willing to pay quite a bit more for someone to help with our English.

Uncharacteristically, Mary found that her middle-class background had become a stumbling block in her formal education, which came to an abrupt end at Grade 9, during the Cultural Revolution in China.

> I only finished junior high. I couldn't go any further because of the Cultural Revolution. All the schools were closed during the early phase of the revolution. Later on, schools were reopened but I wasn't allowed to go back because I didn't have the right background. The committee decided that my parents were too rich, so they gave the opportunity to those who were poor, or whose parents were party members. I was left out. They never considered my academic record, which was in the top quarter easily.

With no more than Grade 6 educations, Lily, Marg and Kam explained that the costs of providing them with a formal education were beyond the means of their families, who had extremely limited financial resources. Lily's problem was not atypical within this group:

> I didn't have a chance to go to school in China. Children in Hong Kong in those days started school when they were a little over three. I arrived in Hong Kong when I was seven and I had never been to school before. On top of that I couldn't speak Cantonese and I had a very tough time adjusting to the new surroundings. Ultimately, a friend of my father sent me to school. My father wouldn't have enough money to do that during those years.

Following immigration, Joni, Sen, Filie, Min and Chi, all financially independent, maintained their middle-class status. They were drawn in the direction of improving themselves either academically or professionally. Joni, the only one in this group who was not employed, spoke about having the financial resources and time to develop a second career:

> I would like to get some tapes and study guides so that I can study on my own. I know I can manage, but I want to improve my conversational skills...I would like to be in the real estate business. This business is pretty flexible; timewise. In my case, I don't really have to worry about the number of sales I will be able to make.

Anne, who was comfortably supported by her husband, was engaged in some home study projects to improve herself. Jane and Paula, though not educationally active currently, stated that they could afford to pursue an education if they so chose.

From the low-income group, Betsy and Kam, both single, initiated some drastic action to improve their future prospects. They terminated their low-paying employment in preparation for, or anticipation of, some full-time retraining programmes. Kam spoke in some detail about her situation:

> I often worked overtime without being paid for it. Also, the hours were not fixed and I had to miss classes on many occasions...Finally, I decided to quit. I have some money saved up to last me a few months. I have applied with the Manpower Office to study in a full-time programme and to get some financial subsidy. I just want to have the time to learn English without interruption. I don't know what will come out of this, I have to wait.

The combined responsibilities of working full-time, studying part-time, and managing a household were physically taxing and emotionally exhausting for Lily and Mary. Having to hold two different jobs, Mary had to give up her learning activities. Lily preferred to study on a full-time basis, but found it financially impossible to do so:

> If the economic situation permitted, I would rather give up working and take on a full-time study programme...It is unfortunate that I can only study on a part-time basis because of the job and the family situation, but I hope that I can ultimately complete my studies, step by step.

Marg had to contend with the most difficult situation, since she felt that employment for her would ease the financial constraints that were brought on by her husband's unemployment. However, she found that without any formal language training it was almost impossible to find a job which she could physically handle.

Before emigration, only one woman out of twelve from the middle-class found that her status had restricted her educational future. Three women from the working class felt that economic hardship constrained their academic achievement. After emigration, eight women retained a middle-class status, five of whom had better access to formal learning activities, while the other three had to postpone their studies or take up alternative study modes. From the low-income group, four women expressed a preference for full-time studies, two had to settle with a part-time involvement while one was not educationally active.

Regardless of their income status, there existed a difference between actual and desired participation in education for some women.

Political Forces

The education of seven participants had been affected by wars or political disturbances in the past. Several women claimed that the political stability and economic opportunity and/or better future for their children offered by Canada were major considerations behind their decision to emigrate.

Flora explained that the 1966 riots, staged by the leftist extremists in Hong Kong, had resulted in a move to Taiwan, where she lived and studied for seven years and acquired another Chinese dialect (Mandarin). This language skill catapulted her into the field of language teaching. As well, she took two university courses on bilingualism, a field that represented a personal as well as professional interest for her.

The other six women were less fortunate. As young school girls in Hong Kong, Chi and Joni lived through the the Japanese occupation of the colony during the Second World War. Their education was disrupted for four years. The war in fact marked the end of Joni's formal education at Grade 6. She talked about the aftermath of the war, which dictated her educational future.

> After the war, I was falling behind in school

> work. Unlike my younger sister who received some coaching from us, I didn't study on my own during those four years. When the school reopened I was too old to be put into a Grade 7 class, so I ended up getting a job as a sales clerk. I went to an evening school to learn English. But I didn't have much time to do any revision. Sometimes I had to skip classes because I had to work overtime.

Lily, a young child living in a village in China in the early 60's during the Great Leap Forward era had had to battle constantly with extreme poverty and starvation. She felt that escaping to Hong Kong with her father had changed the course of her life. Recalling her past, she said:

> We were in China then and we did not have enough food to feed the whole family. You know, the policies in China changed constantly from one month to another in those days. It was very tough for a family in a rural area to earn enough to keep everyone fed. Ultimately, my father and I fled to Hong Kong. We didn't dare to go back to visit the rest of the family for 18 years.

Mary, a high school student during the Cultural Revolution in China, pointed out that the political unrest had destroyed any dreams she had for further learning opportunities, which were strictly controlled by the government.

> My family was quite serious about our education. In those days, we still had to write exams, and all three of us did very well. My dream then was to study to be a doctor...It all came to an end when the Cultural Revolution started. I couldn't go to school then and there was nothing else I could do, so I spent my days in the long queues, getting rationed foods for my family

Like most people from China, Mary was in search of a better life in a free country. She was engaged in language training for over a year before terminating her effort. Nonetheless, she observed a more open attitude in learning here. As she remarked:

> Of course, it is different here. For one thing it is mostly out of necessity that I have to take some English training and also it seems people here do like taking courses after work.

Wendy, Loi and Kam all lived in Saigon during the Vietnam War and the Communist takeover of South Vietnam in 1975. After the political changeover, Wendy found that her family fortune was dissolved, but she conceded that the reason for terminating her schooling was her own lack of interest in school rather than the changes brought on by the political turmoil.

Loi, however, stated that the liberation had dissipated her interest in an education system which had undergone a major political shift to which she could not agree.

> After the liberation, everything they taught in school had some propaganda element, in primary school, in secondary school, and in university. I didn't want to hear any of their political preaching; to me it was a waste of time and I resented their policies.

Kam offered another perspective as to how the war had affected her education.

> I finished primary school in the evenings. In 1968 and 69 the situation was quite chaotic in Saigon, and my grandmother thought it was not safe for me to go to school in the evenings, therefore, I didn't go any further. Besides, there was hardly any money to pay for the school fee.

Wendy and Loi felt that moving to Canada had made studying English their foremost educational goal. For Kam, immigration meant a new educational opportunity which had not been available in Vietnam.

Of those who left Hong Kong for exchange of political stability and a better future in Canada, six of them -- Chi, Joni, Lily, Min, Anne and Marg -- found that they were drawn to language training in which they would not have engaged with such intensity in their homeland. Further, two other women, Betsy and Paula, realized that the new country had offered them some new educational directions which were beyond their reach in Hong Kong. As Paula and Betsy commented:

> I am thinking that maybe, when my kids are a bit older, I may look at the possibility of starting university. I would like to get a degree just for personal satisfaction. As you know, in Hong Kong I would not have the chance to do so; the competition was too keen. Here, this seems to be a reachable goal.
>
> In Hong Kong I was in my own world. I never thought about the importance of education when I was at home. It was only after I came here that I began to learn about so many things.

Six women indicated that wars and political changeovers had had a disruptive effect on their education in the past. Eleven women indicated that their move to a new country created some educational needs not previously recognized. Especially for four women, Canada had provided them with learning opportunities and prospects not available in their own countries.

Support Systems

Thirteen participants reported a readily available support system that they used to address various settlement concerns. An analysis of the friendship network which they established in Canada is directed toward an understanding of their adjustment levels. Finally, the issue of different group dynamics, as reported by various participants, is analyzed.

1. Nature of Support System

Only five women came to Canada with some preparation. Paula, Filie and Sen were well informed about the Canadian living conditions and cultural norms. Before moving to Canada, Joni had visited the country on three separate occasions. Min prepared herself for the move by taking English lessons in Hong Kong. The others were relatively unprepared. However, all participants indicated that the existence of a support system was important in their adjustment experience.

Five women regarded their husbands as the source of primary support. Filie and Paula were well briefed by their husbands on the living conditions in Canada. They also took the initiative to seek out relevant adjustment and educational information after their arrival. Once they found employment, their social circle widened in scope and became an important source of their support network. This development was illustrated by Filie's statement:

> The people I worked with told me about the Certified General Accountant programme...I was told about the university courses by some friends at the East Asian Languages Department.

Mary and Marg also turned to their husbands for information and support. Their relatives became a secondary source of support on which they frequently relied. Both of them stated that major occupational and educational information was supplied by their relatives.

Anne found that her husband's families formed the core of her primary support network, but she also mentioned that the social circle she maintained in her church had steered her toward a new learning activity.

> I had two big families that I could count on...I am doing a correspondence course. A friend in my church told me about it.

Three women found that their brothers had become their major sources of support. Loi, Wendy, Chi all had brothers who had lived in Canada for a number of years and were able to look after their basic and educational needs. As Loi recalled:

> Four months after I arrived, I went to evening school at Vic High for about half a year. My brother helped me to apply for the ESL programme there. Later on my brother took me to AVC to apply for their programme there.

Sen, who was relatively self-sufficient, relied on her in-laws for emotional support. In some detail, she described the nature of this assistance:

> I have very nice in-laws. I think my mother-in-law is an anchor for me. When I feel emotionally down, I just go to her. I have support from her. My in-laws look after me very well, especially when I first arrived. They showed me the ropes to everything and eased my lonliness.

Joni felt that her son and the friends she made in church helped fill most of her social needs. She said:

> My son encourages me to attend some of these church sponsored activities. There is a friend in church who let me know about most of these functions. Some of the younger members in church also encourage me to be involved in these activities.

Betsy was less fortunate, in that her sponsor, her oldest brother, only offered limited help and advice. This, she felt, had made the initial adjustment extremely difficult. With the increasing involvement in school, she eventually formed a friendship network which offered her a lot of assistance. As she recalled:

> My brother didn't really tell us much about life here. We had to find things out for ourselves...It was difficult, since we knew nothing about this country...I made some friends in Vic High. They were all students originally from Hong Kong. We are still good friends now.

Four women acknowledged that there were no family members or relatives they could turn to for assistance. However, Min and Lily were able to cope with most adaptation problems with help from friends they had known in Hong Kong and who had been here for a longer period of time.

Without any outside assistance, Kam and Jane initially had to cope with the new environment on their own. Kam obtained help from a volunteer agency which addressed her settlement and educational needs. Jane eventually established a friendship network with her neighbours, a group of students' wives like herself. The initial lonliness was still fresh in her mind as she recalled:

> We came as independent immigrants, therefore we do not have any relatives here. When we first came, we didn't have any relatives, friends or parents to turn to for help.

Immediate families and relatives became the major source of support for ten women, two of whom also received assistance from their churches. Four other women relied on friends and one relied on an ethnic agency for help and support. Women with no pre-existing support network and who had a more transient moving record (from one city to another) endured the most loneliness during the initial stage of their resettlement.

2. Pattern of the Network

As they settled in, in the new country, the patterns of their social network began to emerge. Ten women indicated that they frequently read Chinese newspapers or watched Chinese television or listened to Chinese radio broadcasts to keep themselves informed of most current events. Three women said that they maintained more contact with Canadian rather than Chinese friends. Three discussed their frequent interaction with some Canadian friends while nine other women socialized exclusively with Chinese friends.

Sen, Filie and Paula all socialized with a mixed (Canadian and Chinese) circle of friends in an extensive way. Filie summarized her experiences:

> I think my lifestyle is more Canadian than Chinese. We have both Canadian and Chinese friends and we socialize with both groups quite regularly.

Maintaining frequent contacts with Canadian friends, Min, Chi and Jane claimed that they still felt closer to their Chinese friends. Min discussed the extent of her friendship with some Canadians:

> I have one or two Canadian friends. They help me look after the shop and do some cleaning for me. We are fairly good friends and we talk about a lot of things.

Joni, Lily and Loi had extremely limited and superficial contact with Canadians. They were, in general, anxious to initiate more interaction with native speakers to improve their communication skills. Joni's feeling represented the attitude of this group:

> Well, I basically live within a Chinese circle. Most of my friends are Chinese and we use Chinese almost exclusively...I should think of doing something outside the normal circle of friends, or else I will never learn the language well enough to do the things I want to do.

Six participants hardly ever interacted with native speakers. Anne, who had been here for ten years, lived within the security of her family circle. The other five women simply lacked the confidence and language skill to communicate with native speakers.

It appeared that only three women with better facility in English were socially integrated into the host culture. The majority, regardless of their length of stay in Canada, still lived within the confines and/or security of a predominantly Chinese social network.

3. Special Group Dynamics

As the participants revealed their socialization patterns, it became apparent that some complex group dynamics were at work in the process. While three women maintained a social distance from some of their co-nationals, six others were inclined to keep their distance from groups that did not use the same language or were of different racial origin. Two pointed out that cultural difference prevented any significant inter-group mixing to occur.

Socializing in an exclusively Chinese circle, Betsy, Mary, and Lily all admitted some ambivalence toward their co-nationals. Consequently, they chose to distance themselves from some Chinese circle to avoid unnecessary gossip. Their following remarks substantiated this disassociation pattern:

> I used to have dreams about the restaurant I worked in. I worked there for six or seven years...I hated people gossiping about one another...I just kept quiet. I don't want to work in a restaurant ever again.
>
> It may sound strange, but I don't want to move around the Chinese circle that often. Making friends with too many Chinese can create a lot of gossip, at least this is what I think. I usually keep pretty quiet and just socialize with the few

> friends I have made.
>
> I think maybe the Chinese are a bit selfish and overly critical. The westerners are more broad-minded, they seem to display their likes and dislikes very openly.

Three women tended to regard Vietnamese immigrants as an out group. Both from Vietnam, Loi and Kam disclosed their perception that Chinese were, normally, a more cultured and well-mannered group than the Vietnamese. Mary's brief comment regarding people from Vietnam was more than telling:

> I rarely talk with those who are from Vietnam. I prefer to work in a place where there are some Chinese.

Sen, in a very different light, discussed her experience of restricted interaction with some Chinese students, due to a language problem. She admitted:

> I don't have very many Chinese friends because they all speak Cantonese and I don't. When I talk to them I have to speak in English. When I first came here I spoke to those students from Hong Kong in English and I felt funny, very funny. Funny not in the sense of being ironic but it just felt strange that I was talking to Chinese, but using a foreign language.

Jane talked about a cultural gap which she felt had hindered her ability to develop a meaningful relationship with native speakers. Likewise, Betsy spoke of the same sentiment more precisely:

> Those I worked with in the restaurant were not really friends. I didn't feel close to them. I couldn't explain why, maybe I thought they were a different kind of people. They were not like Chinese. There was a barrier there.

Apparently, some participants' interpretation or lack of understanding of ethnicity, language, values, and culture other than their own, had given rise to the inter-group as well as intra-group distancing in their socialization process.

Social and Cultural Values

An exploration of four factors: social norms, patriarchal values, family cohesiveness, and parenting responsibilities, provides some insights into these women's behaviour and attitudes. Two additional factors, cultural difference and social reality, are discussed to expose the common feelings and problems faced by the participants when dealing with a new culture.

1. Social Norms

Seven women described, in a number of different incidents, how they reacted in a socially acceptable manner, which was indicative of the social values concerning education to which they subscribed.

Paula speculated that the particular educational path she took was largely a reflection of her mother's values which were, in essence, the common norms to which most women adhered.

> I guess it was pretty standard for someone in our time to go from primary school to high school...Also, my mother thought that a white collar job was quite respectable for a girl, so she was always talking to me about taking some

secretarial training after high school.

Joni commented that her first job as a sales clerk was a socially acceptable occupation for a woman during that period of time.

> In those days, the most popular job for women who didn't have much of an education was sales.

Parents, specifically mothers, were expected to sacrifice their own interests for the benefit of their children. Emigration meant for Min, Lily, and Chi the desertion of a comfortable lifestyle in exchange for an environment which was more conducive to their children's academic development, which subsequently led to their own involvement in various learning activities. Catering to their children's emotional well-being instead of their own, Filie, Paula and Jane, on the other hand, chose to postpone their hoped-for full-time educational undertaking for an extended period of time.

2. Patriarchal Values

Five women discussed the subordinate role to which they were assigned in their families, which very often superceded their specific educational needs. Kam and Mary recognized that they were typically assigned household chores while their brothers were customarily exempted from such duties. In the same context, Anne talked about her brother's privileged position in the family of three girls and one boy, and how he was groomed specifically to study abroad.

At the outset of the Vietnam War, a disproportionately large number of young men fled to various foreign countries. This phenomenon was clarified by Loi's account:

> The Chinese always want to have a son to keep the family name going...I don't think my mother had mentioned out loud that she wanted my brother to leave home so as to keep our family name going. We were very concerned with the conscription and the army business. I guess all other considerations were understood and taken for granted.

To accommodate her husband's academic endeavours, Jane held off enrollment in a full-time university programme, as had been planned when they moved to the United States from Taiwan. This decision inadvertently limited her own academic development and self-confidence.

3. Family Cohesiveness

The concept of family was equivalent to the symbol of unity. Often, individual family members were expected to keep the family's interest at the forefront, at all costs.

Min's experience gave rise to a source of conflict and a sense of guilt which were triggered by her father's traditional idea of family unity.

> Before moving to Canada,I sent my father to a nursing home and he didn't like the arrangement. I told him that we were doing something positive for the kids' future and he shouldn't hold on to the old belief that all his offspring should live in the same household with him throughout his life. Finally, he accepted my reasoning, but I was feeling rather callous having to do that to my father.

Wendy believed that it was her duty to repay her parents by improving their living standard. Furthermore, she also planned to financially support her younger siblings through university. Feeling duty-bound, Wendy was motivated to improve her qualification which might, then, lead to a better job. As she reasoned:

> I will keep on working and studying. I won't even bother thinking about getting married. Maybe in future, I can offer my parents a better life.

This kind of family loyalty was extended far beyond the immediate family members. Likewise, Kam planned to help out her grandmother and uncle who lived in Hong Kong. This was one of the major motivations to her being involved in continuing education, to improve her economic situation.

> For myself, what I used to earn was quite adequate, but I am thinking about my grandmother and my uncle, I would like to save up enough and sponsor them to come.

As was expected of a dutiful daughter and sister, Mary took on two jobs to provide for her mother and older brother both financially and emotionally. As a result, she had to terminate her learning commitment.

Clearly, the maintenance of a close kinship system had either facilitated or inhibited some participants' level of participation in further education.

4. Parenting Responsibilities

Most Chinese women offered extensive as well as intensive emotional support to their children and were extremely concerned about their future. Frequently, great financial and personal sacrifices were made to ensure that their children were well-adjusted to the new country. In great length, nine of the participants explained what they had done and would do to improve their children's future prospects. This, in turn, created a need for them to participate in various educational activities.

Joni, Paula and Chi all shared the same concern about their children's performance in school. Uniformly, they spent a great deal of time and energy in supervising their school work and related academic activities. The extent of their involvement was indicated by the following accounts.

> I helped my kids with their school work every morning and every evening. I was still working then. And, I spent a lot of time making sure the kids were doing well with their studies. I even hired private tutors for them.
>
> I had taken a correspondence course in French with Athabasca University...I have put my kid in a French programme in school and I want to learn enough French to coach him with his school work.
>
> I have children and I have to interface with other sectors of this society. For instance, as a parent, I have to understand what the teachers are trying to convey to me regarding my kids. Although I could have understood what they were saying without learning any extra English, I still prefer to refine and polish my language skills.

Likewise, Marg and Anne were trying to improve their English so that they could communicate with their children because both expected them to be using English when they reached school age. Similarly, Sen, though childless at present, anticipated communicating in English with her future children. This expectation, she said, was one of the reasons she decided to embark on the study of English.

Jane, Paula, Filie and Lily were equally committed to providing a proper home environment for their children. But, this decision interfered with their participation in further education. As Lily said:

> I try to set aside some time to study, but with the housework I have to do around here and the two meals I have to prepare for my son, I don't really have much time to do so.

It would appear that the participants' parenting responsibilities could have either a positive or negative effect on their educational involvement.

5. Cultural Difference

Six women cited a change in their terms of reference, which was influenced by the broader culture, and which, in three cases, facilitated their learning activities. At any rate in two different cases the participants found that a shift in values resulted in some cultural conflicts.

Loi, Wendy and Joni all witnessed a more receptive social attitude in various adult learning settings. They were encouraged by this general trend:

> I think I would like to work for a number of years even after I got married. I like the idea of working and studying even years after you are married and have a family. I never used to think I

> would do that back in Vietnam. And yet this is a way of life here.
>
> I must say that I don't feel embarrassed to go to school here because of my age. At first I was a bit-worried, but now I feel quite at ease because there are a lot of students here who are much older than I am.
>
> At first, I had some reservation about my own age, thinking that I was too old to be involved. Since then, I have learnt that a lot of people about my age are involved in these classes.

Filie's evaluation of the present educational system also implied an acceptance of the new educational and cultural values.

> It was a traditional system, both in Hong Kong and Taiwan...Looking back now, I know it was a spoon-feeding system which would not have worked for my kids who have to live and deal with the culture, the people and the problems here.

Betsy revealed the strained relationship with her parents as she tried to break away from the family to assert her gradually surfacing sense of independence.

> I would like to move out and live on my own. I would like to be more independent, to see what it feels like. I have talked to my parents about it and my parents are very upset about the idea and have threatened to sever our relationship if I try to do so. They can only accept my leaving home if I get married.

Paula reported that, in the past, living in the same household with her mother-in-law had resulted in a very tense relationship between them. She asserted that she now enjoyed the western structure of a nuclear family.

While cultural conflict might not have a direct impact on their educational pursuits, the acceptance of the new country's broader culture signified a certain level of cultural and psychological adjustment and it seemed to have facilitated some participants' educational involvement.

6. Social Reality

All participants expressed a feeling of otherness as a result of having to straddle between two disparate cultures. Eight women specifically related their experiences and perceptions of a social environment which had profoundly impacted on their educational and employment opportunities.

Out of the eight women who held low-paying, menial jobs, four stated that limited English proficiency was responsible for the unfair treatment they received at their places of work. Kam felt that her minimal English had kept her working in a Chinese sector, which at times violated some legislated labour practices.

Loi and Wendy speculated that if their English had been better, they would have been able to obtain better treatment in their jobs. As Wendy said:

> The place where I work now doesn't pay very well, and it is hard work, particularly hard on the eyes. The owner and supervisors are all Canadians. It seems to me that if you can speak with them in English, you will get better treatment or they seem friendlier to you.

Mary, however, spoke about the circumstance under which cultural misunderstanding or misinterpretation might have taken place.

> When my co-workers were talking to each other in Chinese, I didn't feel like joining in because I had a feeling that the supervisor thought we were talking about her, or even laughing at her. It was a very awkward situation.

Three of these women-- Kam, Loi and Wendy-- realized the necessity of improving their communication skills. To this end, they had committed themselves to various language learning activities.

Chi, Filie and Jane, all with a university education, found that their former educational achievements and work experience were not fully recognized in the new country. Their concerns were echoed through Filie's account:

> You know, I had difficulty gaining accreditation for my business degree...My business background perhaps helped me in finding a job, more or less in the same field, even though not exactly in the same kind of capacity for which I was responsible in Hong Kong.

In order to better their job prospects, two of them had plans to upgrade their job skills in the near future.

In a different setting, Sen disclosed the discrimination she encountered in the academic circle. This experience had made her careful in choosing courses taught by instructors who treated non-Canadian students fairly.

> I was taking an English course. I would get 6s or 7s for my essays, which weren't that bad. But then, I went to talk with the professor about my work and he was actually quite amazed that I was Chinese...Later on, my essays would get lower and lower marks every time, even though I worked very hard and thought that my writing style and understanding of the course had improved. I went to talk with him again, and he just said, "All you Chinese students have the same problems...", I was

> so upset. I complained to my department about it and they seemed to understand...Eventually, they disregarded the mark I made from that course.

In brief, all participants observed some social and cultural divergence from their home culture, which affected their educational involvement and lives in general.

Educational Factors

Focusing on the past, a summary of the parental expectations of the participants is presented in the first part of this section. Reference is made to both past and present in the examination of the participants' role models and their individual educational experiences. This analysis is directed toward providing a fuller understanding of the specific motives reported by the participants regarding their current educational activities and future plans.

Parental Expectations

An analysis of the impact of parental expectations on the participants' education, in the past, is presented first in some detail. This is then followed by an assessment of parental expectations, and their influence on the participants' current achievement levels.

Filie, Chi, Sen, Paula and Jane, all with post-secondary training, indicated that their parents had high regard for academic achievement. Their parents either equated education with success in life, or regarded it as an ideal to be upheld. This attitude was exemplified in Sen's case, in which her father exerted the most influence:

> I think my parents influenced me most, in particular my father. My father was a very idealistic person. Like, if I had set a goal, I had to discipline myself to get at it, no matter what it took to accomplish that goal. I think I learnt this from him...I just felt that my father was very idealistic and valued certain things, such as education. And this had a great influence on me.

Mary, Marg and Loi who had an education level ranging from Grades 6 to 12, asserted that their parents believed in the value of a good education. Preoccupied, either with the political unrest or economic uncertainty, all of them chose to terminate their education against their parents' wishes. As Loi recalled:

> Before the liberation, people used to be able to study abroad in places like Taiwan and Japan...My mother had wanted me to go on with my studies, but it was my own decision to quit at that time. I think she understood that, if my heart wasn't there, it was futile to push me into going back to school again.

Regarding their parents as liberal, Joni and Wendy said that they were given the freedom to choose what they would like to do with their education. Wendy chose to discontinue her schooling after Grade 9, and Joni didn't feel any parental pressure for her to move on to Grade 7 after the War.

Both Anne's and Min's parents placed different values on education. Anne's mother had high regard for education, while her father was less assertive in that respect. In Min's case, it was the reverse. Nonetheless, both suggested that this had been one of the major factors that contributed to their dropping out of school at Grade 9.

Betsy and Lily claimed that their parents had little regard for their education. Betsy with a Grade 12 education felt that her parents had never provided her with a sense of direction in her education, as there was minimal communication among family members. This led her, before emigration, to think of education as relatively unimportant.

> Perhaps I think our parents look very stern and this doesn't encourage us to talk with them. Even when we were young, we never liked to talk with our father. We were very scared of him. I never talked to him in Hong Kong. I only started talking to him after we moved here.

Likewise, Lily whose schooling ended at Grade 4 observed that her father had a negative attitude toward her education:

> Unfortunately, I believe my father didn't seem to think education was important. If he had thought so, he wouldn't have asked me to quit school twice. I think he was rather selfish and was thinking of himself.

To this date, Sen still thought that her interest in higher education was an expression of her father's values. On a much different note, Betsy found that her parents non-directive attitude had partly accounted for her lack of interest in school, for the first four years after moving to Canada. Their reticence about her current attempt at least symbolized a level of acceptance.

Fourteen participants concluded that parental expectations had more direct impact on their past educational attainment, whether positive or negative. Their educational background had in some direct or indirect way affected the life course they eventually took. Only two women felt that parental influence had played an active role in their present educational activities. One woman claimed that, as she was a young orphan, her parents values were not of significance to her academic pursuit.

Role Model/Mentor

Eight participants felt that the presence of role models had influenced the way they viewed education in the past. The two most highly educated women, Sen and Filie, had two or more positive role models from whom they obtained advice or moral support. Filie observed that her father's educational values and success in life was a living example for her to emulate. Her older siblings' achievement also inspired her to pursue higher education. A respect for education was further nurtured by a professor under whom she studied for several years.

> I think my parents had a lot to do with that. They encouraged us to study and it was almost expected of us to attend university. That's why all six of us went to university, and it seemed to be a norm in our family...There was a professor who taught me Chinese calligraphy in Taiwan. I learnt from him for seven years; he was a very good teacher and an excellent art master. The experience taught me patience, attention to details and power to concentrate, all of which are not tangible qualities and yet, I believe, will benefit me for life.

In much the same way, Sen's respect for education was cultivated by her father's idealism. This attitude was later reinforced by some college professors whom she respected.

Jane, on the other hand, stated that her decision to obtain a university education was a natural response to her siblings' achievements, which invariably were linked with a college education.

In a slightly different setting, Paula, Loi, Kam and Chi found that the guidance, advice and encouragement offered by their teachers had sustained their interest in learning. As Chi remarked:

> The university lecturers gave us constant encouragement because we were the first group of graduands, and we had to prove our abilities to the general public. In those days, we put forth a lot of effort.

On the contrary, Min noted that her friends' values might have created a negative impact on her schooling:

> The school friends that were close to me weren't all that ambitious. Just like me, most of them got married quite young and subsequently became involved with raising a family.

Eight participants discussed, in both general and specific terms, the issue of role model and how it impacted on their current learning activities. Sen's commitment to higher education was inspired by her father's values. Betsy, Jane and Wendy indicated that some of their friends had virtually become their role models. Jane's expressed interest in computer training was ignited by her two friends' stories of success in this field. Similarly, Wendy repeatedly referred to her friends who had carved out a professional future for themselves since leaving Vietnam. At great length, Betsy talked about her former classmates, who changed her negative attitude toward education. In particular, she singled out one former classmate whom she looked upon as a mentor:

> I think my friends have a lot to do with what I am doing now. They are very different people than those I used to know in Hong Kong. The ones who went to Vic High with me have all gone on to university. I am the only one who is not attending university. My best friend has now finished university. He keeps telling me to go to school. He is only a bit older than I am, but much wiser...He registered me at NAIT and even paid my fee. He gave me a lot of support and offered to coach me if I got into difficulties.

In the absence of a specific role model with whom she had close contact, Lily formulated an ideal which was an embodiment of her own educational values:

> I appreciate people who are educated, and I admire those who can study at a university. I guess I just wanted to get educated.

Not unlike Lily, three others -- Marg, Mary and Kam -- looked upon the researcher, with whom they did not have close contact but whose educational background they admired, as a positive role model. This attitude was reflected in Marg's comment:

> Up till now, I still envy people like you who can have a good education and who can speak English well.

In a negative context, Betsy hinted that her siblings' tendency to drop out of school might have, in part, led to her own termination of two earlier learning activities since moving to Canada. In short, she referred to this behaviour as a normal family trait among all of her siblings.

Apparently, in the past, seven women found that their parents, teachers or siblings had an impact on their education in a positive way. In contrast, one woman felt that her friends had exerted a negative influence on her schooling. With reference to their current educational-activities, one individual internalized her father's respect for learning, three others regarded their friends as a source of inspiration while four women used a general ideal or a distant figure as a role model. Only one woman suggested that her siblings had a negative impact on her education.

Educational Experience

A discussion of the participants' past educational experiences, both positive and negative, is followed by a report of their current experiences.

Five participants, Chi, Filie, Mary, Lily and Sen, reported that their past schooling instilled in them a sense of achievement and self-pride because of their academic successes and leadership recognized by others. This positive experience had reinforced their dedication to achieve academically. As Lily talked of her experience:

> I had never learnt English before and I didn't

> speak any Cantonese, so I got 10 out of 100 in the exam. I can still remember that. I worked very hard when I was in Grade 3 and my marks rose to the 80s in the exams. I even got the highest mark in English in that class...I was doing so well in school and I felt so happy to have a chance to learn.

Paula and Loi regarded themselves as serious students and were encouraged by their teachers to do well in school. Loi recalled:

> I had great respect for my teachers. They were very dedicated and caring, and I enjoyed going to school. I didn't mind all the tests that we had to write in those years. The pressure was much greater than studying here, but I didn't seem to mind. I guess I must have liked school...I think the teacher had a lot to do with that. He was very knowledgeable and dedicated. I think I learnt a great deal from him.

Joni also viewed her schooling in a favourable manner, as she mentioned the social aspect which was of significance to her:

> I couldn't remember if there was any problem in school. It seemed I had a lot of fun in school. I had a number of good friends in school with whom I played basketball and table tennis. We got along quite well.

In a less positive mood, Betsy and Marg traced their dislike of school to the behaviour of their teachers who they thought were insensitive to their needs and highly authoritarian. This was evidenced in Betsy's account:

> In Grade 6 and in junior high, I had some lousy teachers. They were very stern and they beat us with thick rulers when we did something wrong...I think the major reason I disliked school was because of the teachers. If you made a little mistake, they would belittle you in class. I felt very little self-respect in school. I became very

> timid and I had very little confidence in class. I never spoke in the classroom. I never raised my hand to ask or answer a question. If I were asked, I would have to answer but I would never volunteer an answer, even if I knew it would be a correct one.

Anne, Sen, Wendy and Min were all critical of the highly traditional, spoon-feeding system, which they claimed had dampened their enthusiasm for learning, though some more seriously than others. Anne offered her own assessment:

> I just disliked studying. I hated to have to memorize a lot of text. Every night I had to learn a new rhyme, something like Humpty Dumpty and Little Red Riding Hood. I felt like I was pushing a ton of rocks up a hill. When I was in Grade 5, I had already started thinking about quitting school...Maybe they tried to cram too much into me then. The problem of having no one to coach me at home didn't help either.

Three women -- Lily, Joni and Min -- undertook some learning activities beyond their formal education at home. Min took a cooking course shortly after her marriage, and she was able to take an English course for six months before moving to Canada. To improve her English and job opportunity Lily enrolled in an evening class twice but had to drop out of it because of family and job responsibilities. Joni took some Japanese and English courses after work in order to deal efficiently with her customers. She too had to terminate the activities because of a heavy work schedule.

Overall, eight women viewed their past schooling in a positive way. One woman regarded her education as a mixed experience. Six others found that their schooling was peppered with a series of negative experiences. Of those, five reported that they subsequently dropped out of school. Only three women furthered their education outside formal schooling, and just one was able to complete the activity.

In their current educational endeavours, eight women indicated that their instructors had been a facilitating element in their various learning activities. Loi offered a detailed evaluation of the instructors' qualities:

> I am glad the teachers are extremely resourceful here; they use all kinds of methods they can to explain the language to us...If I have something that I don't know how to handle, like doing my income tax or asking for a refund in a store, I ask my teachers. They help me to handle these situations. They also listen to me and talk with me often, after class or during coffee breaks. This kind of conversation does a lot of good for me. They are the only native speakers I can discuss things with.

Betsy believed that the accommodating attitude of her teachers had reversed her negative attitude toward learning:

> It is different here. The teachers are more helpful and they are willing to explain things to me if I don't understand. This makes learning easier for me. For example, in the word processing course, the teacher was very good; she let me come in earlier to practise and even let me come in for an extra day of instruction.

Filie, Anne and Sen all made general comments about the learning system here. They found the new system less restrictive and more suited to their learning styles. Sen summarized her feelings as follows:

> In Taiwan the professors were the authorities. Here, I have to think for myself. The system here helps me to think more critically and it does help

> me to be more creative. I feel a lot more self-respect and I have gained confidence in doing various things...I seem to enjoy studying here more than I ever would have back home.

Paula and Chi rated the various programmes they were involved in as useful, in that they met their specific needs. This was summed up by Chi:

> All the courses I took are useful...I learnt to understand Canadian habits through the course I took from the Chinese students. It was particularly useful when we first arrived. At St. Catherine's, the atmosphere was more relaxed; I went on a lot of field trips and I learnt to know the city and its various landmarks. At the Faculty of Extension, I learnt quite a bit of grammar.

The flexibility and convenience typical of various home-study programmes had drawn favourable response from Paula, Anne and Marg, who felt that their educational needs were partly met by this alternative, given their constraints. Enthusiastically, Anne talked about the correspondence course she was taking:

> I am very serious about this course. It seems very interesting. I have always wanted to study something about Chinese philosophy and calligraphy...The good thing is, I can study on my own and do my assignments when it is convenient for me.

Three women found that various government and volunteer agencies offered them much-needed learning opportunities. Betsy felt that the Manpower Office had offered her a retraining programme that matched her career goal and personality:

> I took a key punching course, sponsored by the Manpower Office. They paid my school fee, which was

> well over $1,000. I quit my job and applied for retraining with them and got into this programme instead of collecting U.I.C. It was a friend who told me about this, so I went there to apply. I thought this programme would suit me fine, since I have always wanted to type and not to talk too much.

Joni stated that the church to which she belonged had offered her various social and educational activities. Through the church she was informed of a programme, which she found useful, run by the Immigrant Women's Centre:

> The programme, Changing Together, may be very helpful to me. It is run by the Immigrant Women's Centre. It is an English course, but it also teaches us how to make changes in life, for example how to get back to the work force, and the kinds of things we should know in making such changes.

Kam found that a volunteer agency had played a big role in addressing her settlement and educational needs:

> I found the most help we got was from the Chinese Benevolent Association in Chinatown. They provided us with information regarding housing, shopping, employment, medical care, and insurance, and even helped us with filling out forms and applications. I even took a citizenship course there.

However, all fifteen women reported a number of inhibiting elements in their learning process. Fourteen women talked about the language difficulties they encountered in learning situations. This had affected different learners in different ways. Filie, Sen, Paula and Chi all experienced initial difficulty in the area of reading. To this end, Sen outlined her major learning barrier:

> I think I have to try harder in my studies than do most local students. My reading speed is

> really slow. I don't know, my reading speed has always been slow. Maybe my English is not good enough...I think I don't have enough cultural background to understand every word, every expression and idiom that I come across. I have to stop very often to check in the dictionary to get the meaning of some words. Sometimes I have to read over a paragraph two or three times before I can really understand it.

In addition to the reading problem, Betsy and Jane felt that language difficulties had affected their understanding of the lectures. As Betsy explained the situation:

> With the word processing course, I found the instructions that the teachers gave were hard to follow. I think maybe my English wasn't good enough. That's why I needed extra time to practise on my own.

Nine women who participated in ESL courses experienced great hardship at the early stage of learning. Most of them had difficulty in understanding the teachers' utterances and in speaking the language. Wendy's problems were typical:

> The first few weeks in class I didn't really understand what the teacher said. Most of the time, I was just guessing...I can speak a bit of English now in class, but I still find it hard to speak and answer questions.

Regardless of their age, four women -- Chi, Joni, Min, and Lily -- thought that their memory had affected their learning capacity. Chi was more specific in her observation:

> Perhaps with my age, I find it difficult to memorize things. For example, with new vocabulary that I learnt in one day, I tended to forget about 80% of them in the next day.

A different explanation was given by Lily regarding her memory problem.

> In Hong Kong, I normally worked eighteen hours every day, holding down three or four different jobs, sleeping four hours at the most. I managed to take some English courses and did quite well too. I had an excellent memory then...After the two operations I have had here, I am just not as tough as I used to be. I get tired easily and my memory is failing. I just don't have the energy to concentrate on what I read or write.

Joni encountered another learning experience which was directly age-linked. From her disclosure, age carried with it a certain degree of stigma in an ESL programme she attended, as she said:

> They put older people in a different stream. I guess older folks don't learn as fast as the younger ones. The advanced classes are for younger people. I guess I am rather useless; that's why they put me in a class for seniors.

Joni, Kam, Lily and Min were all very vocal in expressing their idea about the suitability of some language programmes in which they were involved. Obviously, some of their specific learning needs were not appropriately filled nor some of the programmes effectively administered. These problems were reflected in the following comments:

> I am badly in need of some fast-paced, intensive study of conversational English. I like to learn a lot in a short span of time.

> The only thing I would suggest is that they would spend more time to teach us how to pronounce some words properly. Maybe I can use some lessons in pronunciation.

> I took some ESL classes at my son's school. I only went there for two weeks. The problem was, all the teachers there were volunteers. It seemed to me that there was a different teacher every day. There was no continuity between one lesson and the other. They were teaching us something we hardly had a

> chance to use, something like farming and different farming equipment...Before that I went to AVC, but I quit after two weeks. There were only two hours of instruction every evening, and there was a fifteen minute coffee break in between. It just didn't seem to have enough time for learning... Later, they sent a lady to my home as my tutor. When she went to China, they sent her husband to teach me. I didn't feel very comfortable with him. Perhaps men are not as sensitive as women, to whom I can talk easily.
>
> I don't know what level I am in. I think they have different levels here...I learn a fair bit of grammar and a little bit of speaking, reading and writing the language. I am not saying I am better than most other students in class, but I seem to know everything they teach here. I have learnt most of what they taught here in Hong Kong.

In total, seven participants complained about some learning programmes which had long waiting periods that ranged from six to twelve months. Six participants reported a long waiting period before admission to A.V.C.'s language programme. Wendy stated her case as follows:

> I had to wait for a long time to get into this programme. I applied for admission probably over a year ago.

Similarly, Marg reported a long waiting period with the Home Tutor programme. In addition, she pointed out that inadequate support systems, like child care and transportation facilities also prevented her from taking a daytime programme at A.V.C.

> I had to wait for a long time before a tutor was sent to my house, for a few hours every week, to teach me English. I started in September of last year and the tutor stopped coming after January of this year because she found herself a full-time job...I like to get into the daytime programme at A.V.C. They ran a free day care for the students'

> kids. The problem is that they only look after kids that are over three, and my daughter is not quite two years old yet...Getting punctual and reliable transportation through D.A.T.S. may also be a problem.

Loi and Kam also found that a long waiting period, of six months or more, was common among various training programmes offered by the Manpower Office. As Loi recounted one of her earlier attempts:

> Our friend took us to Manpower to apply for a study programme...We were told there was a six-month waiting list. We couldn't just wait around, so we opted for working first. Then, three months later the application was approved, but I was working then and I didn't want to give up my job.

Wendy, Lily, Joni, Jane, and Mary stated that there was a lack of appropriate counselling facilities to help with their educational and career development. Lily contemplated her future:

> Since I have so little education, I have never really thought about what I can do jobwise. I haven't really discovered what kind of a job is suitable for me...Also, I am not really aware of all the different study programmes in the city, because I don't really know how to get the information...I had been to the Manpower Office, and I didn't find the visit particularly useful.

Most of them, involved in some part-time learning activities at one time or another, showed that they had little awareness of the existing facilities that might be of help to them. Wendy, Joni and Jane all expressed concern over the same type of problem:

> Do you know of any retraining programmes that are suitable for me?

> Do you know of any place that offers this type of course? Can you give me some suggestions?
>
> In Toronto they offered some one- or two-year full-time computer training to some immigrants. My friend in Calgary also took some of these computer courses. I don't think they have this kind of programme in Edmonton. I really don't know.

Five other women, who held full-time jobs at one time or another, believed that time constraints had become a major barrier in their educational activities. Min briefly summed up her case:

> I usually have a very long day, starting with preparing breakfast and lunch for the whole family, then off to work, then off to school, then returning home late to prepare supper. There just wasn't enough time for me to do any revisions.

In their present educational endeavours, eight women felt that the education system, the institutions, the content of the programmes and their format, as well as the teachers, had facilitated their learning in different ways. Conversely, fifteen women confessed that difficulties such as insufficient language ability, failing memory, ill health, inappropriate programmes, long waiting periods, time constraints, limited awareness of existing educational as well as career counselling and opportunities, transportation problems and limited day care facilities had, in various ways, inhibited their educational pursuits.

Educational Activities and Plans

The participants' educational activities and the specific motives for their involvement were discussed. As well, their plans for future involvement were also examined.

Initially, eleven women had participated in ESL training in Canada. Six of them wanted to acquire enough basic English to cope with their day-to-day lives. Five others were determined to overcome the language deficiency so as to improve their job prospects or become more involved at a social level.

Five women undertook various learning activities for differing reasons. Sen, for example, elaborated her goal in very definite terms:

> Learning has always been my goal. I am working toward that now. Within the next five or six years, I would like to complete a Ph.D. programme.

Paula, whose learning activities were motivated by some specific needs at different stages in her life, lucidly summed up her motives:

> In Virden, taking those courses filled my social needs more than anything else. I made a few close friends in those courses...The French I took helped me in coaching my kid with his homework. Now, he is way ahead of me... The computer course will be very useful in case I want to work full-time again.

Both Betsy and Jane participated in some word processing programmes, hoping to find work or establish a career in this field. And yet, Filie's involvement in learning was closely linked with job enhancement and personal interest.

At the time of the interviews, ten women were still actively furthering their education. Out of these, nine were learning English and one was studying in a graduate programme. Even though five were not currently engaged in formal learning activities, almost all participants had some future educational plans. In fact, they displayed two different attitudes toward learning.

Four women affirmed that moving to Canada had not changed their basic attitudes toward education. They speculated that, even in their homelands, they would be engaged in learning activities that were relevant to their particular settings. Sen and Lily were the ones in this group who had long-range educational plans that extended over a period of six years or more. They projected a strong sense of commitment to their plans, as they were both motivated by a shared, highly idealistic goal which was related by Lily:

> It is my wish that I can get a good education. It is not only for the sake of getting a good job. I think I can become a better, a more knowledgeable person...Right now, I hope that I can finish Grade 6. After that, I will look further ahead to finishing high school. Maybe, at that time, I will have the confidence to think about university. It will be a long, long journey. I like to go about it step by step.

Jane and Filie both expected that they would be involved in some job-related training if they were still living in their homelands. Their plans were focused in the direction of career development. But, with their immediate priority placed on their families, a full-fledged commitment to their career enhancement might not be possible within the next two years.

The other eleven participants recognized that immigration had either created a need or an opportunity, both of which were not observed in their homelands, for them to become educationally active. Betsy, Loi and Joni all shared the same motive of upgrading their language facility. English proficiency was, to them, a stepping stone to successful participation in some career building programmes, which required from two to four years of full-time studies. In great detail, Loi disclosed her future plans:

> I want to go into a full-time academic upgrading programme. I will not work then, I am willing to spend two or three years to do that. After that, I want some vocational training, some secretarial or office training so that I can find work in this area.

According to Min, Wendy, Kam, Marg and Chi, moving to Canada created a need for language training. Their major motive was to overcome the language deficiency which adversely affected their everyday life and, for some, job performance. They all indicated a preference to be involved in a part-time programme for two or three years. Kam and Min respectively discussed their plans and alternatives:

> I hope to get into a government assisted full-time ESL programme... If this is not approved, I will have to look for a job and keep on studying in the evenings for another two to three years.

> I am not very ambitious, I'll be very satisfied if I can communicate reasonably well... I would continue with this English training for a couple more years, at which time, I think I should be able to efficiently run my business.

Both Anne and Paula were contemplating permanent employment; however, they still put their families' needs in the forefront. They did not feel the sense of urgency which confronted most of the other participants, who took part in some formal learning activities. They had some plans which were not for the immediate future. As Anne said:

> My major concern is to look after the family... When my daughter gets a bit older, I'll take some ESL courses. I will give myself two years to do that before I try the job market.

Mary, who once was involved in language training, which she claimed she needed, did not have a definite future plan. She was unable to commit herself to a study schedule, largely because of the job and family situation. She remarked:

> Perhaps things will improve if my brother gets a better job. I don't think I can resume my English lessons; not for a year or more, I really don't know.

All together, fourteen women had some well laid out plans to fill some clearly-identified educational needs. Language improvement was the major issue for ten of them. For two, personal satisfaction was the key concern, while two others aimed for career development. Only one had no fixed plan for the future.

Using the participants' own words, this analysis illustrates how personal, socio-cultural and educational factors influenced their adjustment and learning activities. What follows in the next chapter is a discussion of the different levels of educational involvement of the participants.

CHAPTER SIX

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATION GROUPS

The presentation in this chapter is structured around the different levels of educational involvement of the participants. The characteristics of each participation group and their involvement records are highlighted in Table III in the following page. The characteristics of each group and the factors influencing their particular involvement are examined and discussed.

High Participation

This group (Sen, Chi, Min, Loi and Kam) consists of five individuals who had at least five months of part-time educational participation per year. Their length of stay in Canada fell within one and six years. Their learning activities were generally carried out on a continuing basis. At the time of the study, all five were educationally active. In addition, they all had plans for further participation. Three were satisfied with both working and studying part-time for the next few years while two other women hoped for full-time studies for one or two years.

The factors that contributed to their particular level of involvement were complex and, to some degree, interrelated. The group came from a variety of educational and social backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 29 to 55. But

TABLE III - CHARACTERISTICS AND EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS OF HIGH, MODERATE, AND LOW PARTICIPATION GROUPS

		Age	Education	Occupation	Age of Children	Training Programme	Institution Attended	Training Period	Year in Canada
High Participation	Sen	29	M.A.	Sessional	--	Grad. Studies	U. of Alberta	3 Yr.(f/t) 8 mo.	4
	Chi	55	B.Com.	Accounting Clerk	18, 15	ESL, Computing	U. of Alberta, Faculty of Extension, Campus Volunteers-U. of A., St. Catherine's	9 mo.	1
	Min	39	G. 9	Business Co-owner	18, 16, 14, 12	ESL	St. Hilda's, AVC	7 mo.	1
	Loi	30	G. 12	Handbag Maker	--	ESL	Victoria High, AVC	20 mo.	3
	Kam	37	G. 6	Not Employed	--	ESL	Victoria High, AVC, Chinese Benevolent Society	30 mo.	6
Moderate Participation	Filie	35	B.Com.	Teacher's Aide, Instructor	7, 5	Actg., Child Development, Language	Nait, Grant MacEwan College, U. of Alberta, Public School Board	24 mo.	9
	Paula	39	G. 12, Diploma	Secretary	6, 4	Gen. Interest French, Wd/ Processing	Company In-Service, Athabasca University, Alberta College, Grant MacEwan College	19 mo.	9
	Betsy	26	G. 12	Not Employed	--	High School, Actg., ESL, Wd/Processing	Victoria High, Nait, Alberta College, Manpower Training, AVC	14 mo.	7
	Joni	55	G. 6	Not Employed	35, 32, 30	ESL	Campus Volunteers-U. of Alberta, Immigrant Women's Centre	4 mo.	2
	Lily	32	G. 4	Restaurant Manager	11	ESL	Alex Taylor, AVC, Home Tutor-AVC, St. Catherine's	6 mo.	3
	Mary	32	G. 9	Seamtress, Waitress	--	ESL	AVC	8 mo.	4
	Wendy	32	G. 9	Seamtress	--	ESL	AVC	4 mo.	2
Low Participation	Jane	31	B.Com.	Homemaker	3, 1	Wd/Processing	Manpower Training - Toronto	4 mo.	4
	Anne	32	G. 9	Homemaker	4, 2	ESL, Chinese	Victoria High, Taiwan Overseas Correspondence School	9 mo.	10
	Marg	31	G. 6	Homemaker	4, 1	ESL	Volunteer Tutor, Home Tutor - AVC	5 mo.	6

the common feature within this group was that they were all newer immigrants, who had been living in Canada for an average of three years. Except for one woman who was pursuing academic studies in order to "find a higher way of expressing herself", the rest were ESL learners. Essentially, they were addressing a deficiency need so as to adjust better socially and occupationally. Among these four individuals there was a sub-group of two from Vietnam where the school system offered them limited exposure to English. Their sense of urgency to rectify a language deficiency was matched by their commitment to language learning. While they were able to secure low-paying jobs, their social adjustment was minimal. They expressed a desire to study on a full-time basis to improve their situations. The other two language learners who had previous exposure to English at work and in school were more satisfied with their occupational status and found that part-time learning was sufficient for their circumstances.

Four of the women in this group were employed and all five were financially self-sufficient. They all envisioned working or continuing to work in the future. The necessity or desire to work may have created a stronger impetus for them to better themselves or to improve their language skills through further education.

All five women were either single or married with no pre-teen children. Apparently, their household responsibilities were not as demanding as the responsibilities of those who had younger children. Furthermore, they were able to enlist substantial support, either from their husbands, teenaged children, or brothers in the sharing of household duties. The involvement of male family members in this capacity seemed to have facilitated their learning activities.

Although four women had had positive experiences in their previous education and one had not, all five viewed education in a positive light. Two women in particular had a high regard for education, and both had some positive role models they aspired to emulate. At least in this group, the more educated they were, the more active they were in further education. Perhaps all these factors predisposed their dedication to learning.

Moving to Canada, according to three women, was a long-thought-out, carefully-prepared process. The move was an informed choice made together with their husbands. By and large, they had anticipated the need for or the chance of further education to achieve their personal goals or to function properly in the new country. All three contributed to the family finances as much as their husbands and appeared to enjoy some autonomy in the decision-making process concerning their educational future.

Some male-centred social norms and patriarchal values seemed to have a stronger hold in the two women from Vietnam, a society which still holds fast to the traditional Chinese values. They accepted without question the belief that men naturally commanded higher social, political and personal power. They had also internalized the belief that education was more important to men, who were conceived as major or sole providers for the families. Their brothers invariably acted as major decision-makers in the current family setting. However, the impact of the new culture, specifically the more open attitude to learning, had certainly made an imprint on their minds. The receptive attitude to adult education and accessibility of learning opportunities had, at some levels, altered their perception of the role of continuing education in a woman's life. Marriage and further education did not have to be mutually exclusive. Having to become financially self-sufficient and to adjust to a new country, both were actively involved in language learning. As one woman observed, her change in attitude was like "becoming a different person."

On the whole, all five women displayed some characteristics that may have had a positive influence on their educational pursuits. They were relatively independent individuals, showing varying degrees of self-confidence, extroversion and determination in adapting to a new country. Most of them were very active in seeking out learning opportunities. This was attested to by the seven different agencies that the language learners had attended in an effort to overcome the language barrier.

Evidently there were factors that distracted them from continuing education. But the positive factors seemed to have outweighed the negative ones in their specific cases. While the high level of participation could not be viewed as an indication of a high level of adjustment to Canada, four women at least indicated that the expectation of a smoother, easier adjustment was a primary motive for their educational undertakings.

Low Participation

At the other end of the continuum were three individuals (Jane, Anne and Marg) who had engaged in no more than one month of part-time learning activities per year. They had been living in Canada from four to ten years. Most of their learning took place shortly after they arrived in Canada and was followed by a long inactive period. One woman had recently started a home-study programme.

Two women had been involved in ESL training because they needed basic English for day-to-day communication. The other had undertaken some job training. All three anticipated some language or job training for one or two years before entering or re-entering the labour force. Due to family responsibilities, two women did not anticipate undertaking any training for the next few years.

This group came from diverse social and educational backgrounds. One woman had a university degree, two others had no more than a Grade 9 education. They were all longer-term immigrants with an average stay of 6.7 years in Canada. All of them were in their early 30s, married, and with two pre-school children each. They were full-time homemakers and were financially dependent on their husbands. Two of them had no working experience in Canada. Not being employed had perhaps diminished their sense of urgency to get involved in language training, as their social circle rarely went beyond their homes. Two women had little input into the decision to move to Canada. They were not well-prepared for the move. As a result, they did not expect that further education was necessary for the transition to a new country.

The role of homemaker was uncritically accepted by two women who regarded the domestic role as their major life task at this stage. Both had been raised in very traditional families where a woman's role was strictly defined, and where they witnessed their brothers being given more freedom, responsibility, and academic challenge. This upbringing may have limited their vision of a woman's potential beyond the domestic realm. Their educational needs did not seem to be tangibly supported by their husbands. Prior to their marriages, they had not had a chance to live independently. Their husbands, who were more educated and had lived in Canada for a longer period of time, became the major decision-makers in the families. These women took on a secondary, supportive role in the family setting. Consequently, they were protected and even shielded from the broader society, becoming habitually dependent on others to make major decisions for them. They also lacked the independence and confidence to actively plan and search for formal learning opportunities. One woman's physical disability in many ways complicated her situation and severely restricted her access to education.

The other woman valued the independence and satisfaction she had derived from paid work prior to her marriage. In the past, she had given up her own academic pursuits to accommodate her husband's career. Presently, dissatisfied with her homemaker's role, she was struggling at a personal level with the issues of self-development, personal identity and family responsibility.

Regardless of their backgrounds and education, all experienced greater difficulty in terms of social and economic adjustment. Isolated from the broader society and lacking in confidence, they lived principally within a Chinese circle and had formed their own sub-culture as a coping strategy. "Depressed," "scared," "isolated" and "lonely" were the words they used to describe their adjustment experiences. It was obvious that few of their social, educational or psychological needs were being met.

All three women had had some negative learning experiences which may have shaken their confidence in formal learning situations. Hindered by various constraints, they resorted to some informal learning activities to prepare for future formal learning and to raise their confidence levels.

A number of factors were cited by this group as major barriers limiting their learning opportunities: little awareness of existing programmes, long waiting lists, insufficient support services, and limited social contact. Apparently, a higher education level and a better command of English made social adjustment less problematic for one woman. Despite the long period they had lived in Canada, the overall adjustment progress for this group was still limited. The low level of educational participation had not helped alleviate their major adjustment problems, such as language difficulties, restricted job opportunities and social isolation. Without any educational involvement, these problems were unlikely to be solved to any significant extent.

Moderate Participation

Seven individuals (Filie, Paula, Betsy, Joni, Lily, Mary and Wendy) were involved in part-time learning for at least two months per year. Their average length of stay in Canada was 5.1 years. The involvement pattern of this group was more varied. The majority were ESL learners who were educationally active during their initial adjustment stage (first one to two years). Participants in other educational programmes involved on a continuous but intermittent basis, their involvement was more situation-oriented, in that a particular interest or life situation prompted their participation.

The majority of the ESL learners, whose formal education ranged from Grades 4 to 9, dropped out or were forced out of school in the past. At that time, they all welcomed the chance to learn; as one woman put it, "to make up for the lost time and opportunities." They were anxious to overcome a language deficiency and to create better life chances, principally improved job prospects. Other women who had a stronger educational background participated in learning for personal interest and career development. Four women were active in language training. Most ESL learners envisioned continued involvement in the next few years.

This group again came from a variety of social backgrounds. Four women were married with three having young school-aged children. Three others were single. While five women were currently employed, all were financially self-sufficient. The better educated ones also had a better command of English and were better adjusted to Canada. Having established themselves at work and in the community, they were evidently more confident and independent than other women in this group. More significantly, they were able to maintain wider social circles and broader friendship and support networks.

As family unity was an essential part of these women's lives, some of them made personal sacrifices in their learning endeavours to accommodate other family members' interests. Three women, faced with the pressure of work, studies and home responsibilities, had to curtail or defer their further education. Often, time constraints were mentioned as major inhibiting factors. There appeared to be an absence of concrete spousal support for their continuing education. On the other hand, some single women, encouraged by their recent positive learning experiences, became more dedicated learners and had either a mentor or role model to whom they could relate.

In general, married working women with young children faced more problems in their educational pursuits. Single women with limited family responsibilities fared much better. The most cited inhibiting factors were time constraints, long waiting lists, unsuitable programmes, and lack of awareness of learning opportunities and counselling facilities.

Discussion

What emerged clearly from the data is that the participants have different levels of educational involvement. Their participation varies with their year of stay in Canada. The categorization of high, moderate and low groups used in this study has some limitations because it is based on their total length of stay in Canada. In any event, the preceding analysis indicates that the factors which influenced these Chinese immigrant women's participation in education are many-fold and generally defy a simple cause-and-effect explanation. In all cases, a host of personal, socio-cultural and educational factors come into play. As Cross (1981) has indicated, adult learners' participation is essentially an interaction between internal factors like self-evaluation, life goals, attitudes about education, and external factors such as learning opportunities, barriers and life transition.

This study clearly indicates that full-time homemakers who are raising families have the fewest opportunities to participate in further education. In sharp contrast, women with few home responsibilities or who are single are more able to undertake learning activities. Obviously, there is a gap between the actual and desired involvement levels. This is confirmed by the number of women who have indicated a wish for increased involvement, the number of those who have utilized informal learning to partially meet their needs, and those who have experienced long waiting periods before admission to a programme. It also indicates that most language learners experience severe adjustment problems psychologically, socially and occupationally. They can not participate fully in the mainstream of society; nor can they find satisfactory employment. This situation in turn reinforces their feeling of "otherness." Above all, the language learners' needs are varied and complex; they are not strictly confined to various linguistic skill areas. Rather, their learning needs are linked to settlement-based, work-related, and academic-oriented concerns, as well as various cultural, emotional and personal issues.

Invariably, women who are the most active in continuing education receive the most extensive and substantial support from their family members. Regardless of the structure of a family, co-operation and support from a male family member, be it a husband, brother or son, significantly facilitates a woman's learning endeavour. The power structure within the male-centred hierarchy of a Chinese family undoubtedly plays an important role in these women's continuing education. Habitually, in a Chinese family, familialism is placed far above individualism. Bound by this value, the women's educational decisions are based more on family needs than their personal ones. Catering to her family's needs, one woman withdrew from a much-needed language course. In some cases, the family situation has dictated their particular educational choices. For example, one woman took French in order to be able to supervise her child's school work and another learnt English to accommodate her children's language needs and preferences. Obviously, their children's welfare has received more attention than their's. Still, in some other cases, their educational activities are reduced or postponed, causing some unresolved feelings and conflicting tensions which have just barely been brought to the surface. Apparently, some women have paid a high price on either a personal or emotional level in accommodating other family members' needs.

It seems that it is easier for single women to adopt and take advantage of the new culture's open attitude to learning. A change in attitude is transformed into action partially facilitated by the financial self-sufficiency and the relatively fewer domestic duties they have to take on. And yet, being financially self-sufficient has a mixed influence. Some women find that having to work or to provide for themselves and others has made it crucial to improve their job performance or future prospects through education. Others find that the job situation by itself or combined with other duties makes learning more difficult or impossible.

Educational factors in combination with other variables also feature prominently in this study. The better educated women who are longer-term immigrants and who have worked in skilled professions are generally more fluent in English and adjust better culturally, socially and economically. A general dissatisfaction was expressed by a few whose previous experience and qualifications are not recognized. None the less, their confidence levels are on the whole higher and are more independent when solving various adjustment and educational problems. Some, with a high regard for education, stimulated by the more liberated system and positive learning experiences, become very active learners. Others, who are less educated, apparently have more problems in adapting to the new country. However, the combined influence of positive learning experiences, a flexible learning environment and/or the presence of a role model have helped to raise the confidence levels and determination of a few women in this group. They have become more committed to learning and more apt to plan for further learning activities.

What contributed to these women's participation in education is indeed a complicated issue. For example, some commonly cited learning barriers may have a more severe impact on some individuals' participation than on others. A better understanding of their situations can only be achieved by viewing the various factors in their totality rather than in isolation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTION

The focus of the study, the research findings and the conclusions are reported in this final chapter. Recommendations for educators and institutions, as well as possible foci for further research are also highlighted. A reflection on the entire research process is presented as a concluding section.

Summary

Focus of the Study

The study originated from an interest in examining adjustment problems and educational involvement in formal learning activities of Chinese immigrant women. The basic assumption was that further education could enhance an immigrant's ability to adjust linguistically, occupationally, socially, and even culturally to the new country. The specific research purpose was to describe, from the women's viewpoint, their major adjustment concerns and various factors contributing to the different involvement patterns in educational pursuits. The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Why do Chinese immigrant women choose to become involved in various learning activities?
2. In what ways do personal factors influence their educational participation?

3. In what ways do socio-cultural factors influence their educational participation?

4. In what ways does previous educational background influence their educational participation?

5. What are the common and the distinctive characteristics of members of high, moderate and low educational participation groups?

The study was based on interviews with fifteen Chinese immigrant women. The strategy used in the research was grounded essentially in a subjective perspective. The data were analyzed within an analytical framework which involved searching for common themes to reveal patterns of participants' interpretation of their experience.

A profile of each woman was compiled to offer the reader a basic understanding of the participants' backgrounds and educational involvement. Using a thematic approach, the analysis utilized the participants' description to show how personal, socio-cultural and educational elements affect their adjustment or learning activities. The data were so organized that every major element was viewed from the perspective of having either a positive (facilitating) or negative (inhibiting) influence on the women's adaptation and learning.

Findings of the Study

The findings are reported under three major headings: personal factors, socio-cultural factors and educational factors.

1. Personal Factors

Personal factors which were related to adjustment and educational involvement included English proficiency, employment experience, family dynamics and personality traits. The participants exhibited three levels of English proficiency. Their command of English ranged from good, through fundamental, to minimal. Women with more formal education were also more proficient in English and experienced less difficulty in the adaptation process. They were most likely to be involved in various educational pursuits other than English. The women in the other two categories participated primarily in English training.

Before immigration, all women were employed in positions commensurate with their educational backgrounds. After immigration, only those with a higher educational level considered their employment to be satisfactory. Others, by and large, were dissatisfied with their employment status.

Single women and married women with no young children experienced more flexibility in their learning pursuits in terms of family support. Conversely, some of the women who were full-time homemakers or working mothers found that they had to sacrifice their learning opportunities due to family responsibilities. In some cases, the husbands and other family members seemed to be the inhibiting factors for their continuing involvement in education.

With respect to personality, six individuals acted very independently. Five other women, who were less independent, experienced difficulties in adjusting socially to life in Canada. Seven women were confident of their learning activities and adjustment to the new country, while six others, who had limited English proficiency, were less confident. Three women who appeared to be extroverts experienced more success in their English training while four others who were somewhat introverted had more difficulty in their adjustment. Four individuals showed evidence of growth and maturity in their readiness to reassess their life goals. Regardless of the various adversities they had experienced, two women displayed a high degree of resilience not evident in the others. Independence and confidence were generally positively related to an individual's educational background. There was no evidence of such a relationship with respect to other traits. Fundamentally, those with two or more positive characteristics such as relatively high independence seemed to adjust better to life in Canada.

2. Socio-cultural Factors

In the socio-cultural area, significant findings related to elements such as economic and political background, support systems, social/cultural values and social reality.

Before immigration, five women found that economic stability enabled them to receive post-secondary training. In contrast, three women found that limited economic resources made it impossible for them to go beyond grade 6. Those with limited formal education experienced more problems in their adaptation to Canada. After immigration, five women were financially self-sufficient and were more able to engage in the learning activities they desired. Three individuals with low income were not able to participate in their learning pursuits as fully as they would have liked. Political disturbances in the past facilitated one woman's previous education but disrupted the education of five individuals who were involved in learning at the time of the study.

When they immigrated to Canada, all of the women either came with or were reunited with their families. The majority of them relied on their immediate family members to assist with settlement problems. In truth, their immediate families or relatives became the core of their social network.A few depended on friends who were more established to help with their adjustment concerns. Only three middle-class women who were fluent in English and were working in skilled professions were socially integrated into the mainstream of society. There was some evidence that their economic and cultural integration was well advanced. Three others had achieved only limited social integration while the rest remained socially segregated from the host society. Most of the women craved the friendship of Canadians but lacked the language ability and contacts essential to any meaningful interaction. A few cited cultural differences and language difficulties as major barriers to socializing with Canadians. There were indications of some cultural misconceptions or misunderstandings that may have contributed to social distancing. Among those who socialized minimally with members of mainstream society, some, paradoxically, also maintained a certain distance from some co-nationals to avoid gossip and conflicts. Though all were Chinese-speaking, there were internal divisions. For example, few socialized with those born and raised in Vietnam. Other women rarely socialized with their co-nationals because they used different dialects.

The standard social norms in the Chinese culture had relegated women into certain secondary roles. In a male-dominated system, some women had in the past compromised their educational aspirations and had moved into traditional employment patterns. A few had started to question their traditional roles, and some had become more receptive to western values. Still, there were others who were bound by the traditional female roles and who had difficulty adjusting to the new land or who had little opportunity to participate in learning activities at a desirable level.

A social reality in which discrimination against women who were visible minorities was reported by some of the participants. Most women found that they had little chance for upward movement in the occupational hierarchy. They worked at menial, low-paying jobs and a few felt that they were paying a financial penalty on the job because of their inadequate language ability. Even those with professional training and experience had their upward mobility blocked by stringent accreditation requirements.

3. Educational Factors

Parental influence, role models and past educational experiences played significant roles in the participants' previous education. These same factors still exerted some influence on their current educational involvement and future learning plans.

Five women indicated that in the past their parents had facilitated their educational pursuits and, as a result, they were able to obtain post-secondary schooling. However, six reported their parents' attitude had adversely affected their desire to learn. Currently, two women felt that the value their parents' placed on education had encouraged them to further their education.

Eight women stated that either their parents, siblings, or teachers had helped shape their positive attitude toward education. The peers of one individual had a negative impact on her educational pursuits. At the time of the study, eight women found that their friends or close family members had been an inspiration for them to further their education. One stated that her siblings had had a negative influence on her recent learning endeavours.

In reference to their past schooling, eight women reported that this was a positive experience while one regarded it to have been a mixed experience. On the other hand, six women found that either the teachers or the system had contributed to their past lack of interest in school. With respect to more recent experience, eight regarded the teachers as a positive force in their learning activities. Others stated that government subsidized programmes, churches and volunteer organizations had provided them with various learning opportunities. Still others commented that the openness to adult learning had facilitated their involvement. However, most women reported learning difficulties which were directly linked to their English proficiency. Some complained about the long waiting period for most government programmes. Several women indicated little awareness of the goals and objectives of the language programmes in which they participated. A few reported that some language programmes were not suitable to their needs. Married or older women tended to face more structural barriers to involvement in learning activities. Some women indicated a need for academic and vocational counselling, while others identified factors such as time constraints, age, declining memory and lack of support system as stumbling blocks to their further education.

Fourteen women had very definite plans to further their education in the future. The immediate goal for the majority was to address a deficiency need by upgrading their English or job skills in the next few years. A few who were interested in self-development indicated less urgency to realize their plans.

Conclusions

1. Personal factors such as English proficiency and work experience had a crucial impact on the adjustment experience and educational invovlement of the participants in terms of the kind of programmes in which they enrolled. To a large extent, family factors and self-evaluation exerted significant influence on the degree of their involvement.

2. Political and economic forces in the past had limited the educational achievement of some women who also faced more serious difficulties in adapting to the new country. However, the degrees of educational involvement appear to cut across all income and educational levels. To a significant extent, economic situation and strict role confinement had limited the full participation of some women. On the other hand, an acceptance of the new attitude to learning had encouraged some to learn.

3. The degree and extent of various adjustment problems experienced by those with a more extensive educational background were less severe than for those with limited education. The patterns of these two groups' educational

involvement were, in general, dissimilar. While the former tended to be involved on a continuous but intermittent basis, the latter appeared to have highly concentrated participation during the first two years in Canada.

4. Basically, all learners were needs oriented. The majority perceived language training as their immediate goal and the key to a smoother adjustment. By this definition, their learning was motivated by an expectation to enhance future circumstances. However, those who undertook various other learning tasks were prompted into action by a specific life situation. In this case, their learning is more situation-oriented.

5. The most influential facilitating elements appeared to be essentially internal in nature. Women who had fewer home responsibilities, substantial spousal or familial support, a clearly-defined learning objective and a stronger self-concept were more active learners. With the absence of these basic elements, compounded by the various situational or institutional barriers, the learning activities of some women had to be deferred, reduced or terminated.

6. Almost all participants had some future learning plans. Most learners projected at least two years of continuous involvement while a few who were not currently involved

anticipated active participation in the next few years. Over half of the language learners even had long-term plans to upgrade their education and job skills.

7. There are some distinctive characteristics among the participants who have different levels of educational involvement. The women in the high particpation group are all relative newcomers who are either single, or married with no young children. In sharp contrast, those who have a low participation record are longer-term immigrants who are full-time homemakers in their early thirties and who have pre-school-age children. The group with a moderate participation record is from a wide age-range (26-55) and have been in Canada for an average of five years.

Recommendations

The results of the study have implications for educators as well as for institutions which work directly with or offer services to immigrants. Relevant future research directions related to various immigrant issues are also suggested by the outcomes of the study.

For Educators

1. Many immigrant educators become the major or sole western

contact which their learners are able to maintain. Because of the rapport and familiarity learners develop in teaching-learning contact with their instructors, learners may seek assistance and advice in matters that may or may not relate to a learning situation. Under such circumstances, instructors should be prepared to go beyond their normal classroom duties in relating to the learners. Even if instructors are not able to deal with specific problems, they may be able to refer learners to other professionals or agencies.

2. Since several participants have indicated that some programmes do not meet their needs or that they are unsure of the specific programme objectives, instructors should attempt to communicate with the learners through open dialogue and discussion regarding their expectations and learning objectives. Where possible, referrals or transfers to more suitable programmes within or outside of an agency should be made at an early stage. This may help to reduce the drop-out rate as well as students' and instructors' frustrations.

3. In many respects, educators are mediators between an agency and the immigrant learners. As such, educators should communicate the specific needs and interests of the students to the policy makers in order that further courses, information seminars and support services may be planned to

address those needs.

4. Educators should be prepared to act as interpreters and transmitters of the host culture for learners who have little contact with the broader society. They should discuss educational, occupational, social, cultural, political, and women's rights issues with their learners as many are not aware or have little understanding of these. In addition, educators can, through their own professional organization, lobby government and immigrant agencies for changes and improvement for the learners' welfare.

5. Some participants have expressed a need for an increased level of learning activities. This would imply that some part-time programmes which last only a few instructional hours per week do not sufficiently meet their needs. To enable learners to pursue their studies beyond the normal classroom hours, educators should introduce them to various alternative learning modes, such as audio-visual aids, self study guides and library resources. Above all, they should be made aware of the various learning opportunities and resources that are available.

For Institutions

1. As is indicated by the results of the study, the needs of the language learners are varied and divergent. Frequently,

their learning needs go beyond linguistic concerns. To properly identify these needs, a comprehensive needs assessment, which focuses on the learner's language ability, education level, work and life experience, specific learning objectives and goals, and other relevant information, should be conducted to improve the placement process. Information compiled from the assessment may also serve as a data base from which to design courses that closely match the learners' needs.

2. While some participants are not aware of the objectives of the ESL programmes in which they have enrolled, others have found that the programmes did not meet their needs. To overcome these problems, ESL programmes should be based on a detailed outline that clearly explains the course content, focus, and emphasis which should be available to all prospective learners. Great care should be taken to assist learners to clarify issues in course selection and to ensure that all are enrolled in suitable programmes.

3. Language or job training is needed, not only by newcomers, but also by long-term immigrants who previously have not had the chance to learn or are not utilizing their previous job skills and talents. In general, there appear to be long waiting periods for government sponsored full-time programmes. In some institutions, even the part-time

programmes have long waiting lists. More funding for full-time and part-time programmes is needed. More comprehensive educational and support services such as daycare facilities and various counselling services would also assist both full-time and part-time learners.

4. Obviously, homebound or handicapped women are at a distinct disadvantage as far as access to language and other training programmes is concerned. There appears to be a long waiting list for ESL home tutor programmes for this group. Obviously, more outreach programmes and home tutors are needed. To help socially integrate these learners, a home tutor's role should be that of a language instructor, a culture interpreter or a friend. Careful matching of both learners' and tutors' interests and backgrounds can also ensure a more successful programme.

5. Since some women are learning on an informal basis, it would imply a need to explore the possibility of setting up some community-based, informal learning opportunities for these women. Perhaps some alternative delivery modes could be utilized to serve this population or those who are homebound.

6. Many ESL programmes are run by volunteers or community-based agencies which offer substantial assistance to various immigrant communities. However, some programmes

seem to need better coordination and organization to guarantee consistency and quality in their programme delivery.

7. Most participants have indicated a desire to enter or re-enter the work force. Others are hoping for better job prospects. However, most of them have very limited English proficiency. To help them compete in the job market, governments should design or fund projects that deal with the special demands of this group. Programmes such as confidence-building, job-search strategy and job-training with a solid language component should be made available to immigrant women.

8. There seems to be enough demand to warrant more ESL programmes, designed specifically for immigrant women, to deal with various personal, emotional, familial and related women's issues. In offering programmes along these lines, ESL agencies should consider using female instructors who would be more capabable of establishing a comfort level and trust in a women's programme. This would enable the learners to openly discuss various relevant issues and concerns.

9. A lack of awareness of immigrant services, counselling facilities and learning opportunities is reported by some participants. To reach these immigrant women, wider publicity

is needed. To this end, various ethnic newspapers and other media should be utilized. As a part of community service, this type of public announcement is usually done on a no-charge basis and is an effective way of reaching different linguistic groups who have limited English proficiency.

For Research

1. No research has been done to systematically explore issues such as immigrant women's actual and desired educational participation, their formal, informal and non-formal learning activities, their preferred learning modes and the needs of non-learners. An investigation into any of these issues will yield more understanding of the immigrant women's overall situations.

2. ESL courses, settlement related programmes and government subsidized job-training programmes have been in existence for several years. A formal evaluation of these programmes, in terms of the learners' subsequent adaptation experiences, and social, occupational and cultural adjustment has not been done, but is needed to gauge their effectiveness.

3. There appears to be a need for an all-inclusive survey that lists all immigrant services, settlement related

programmes and ESL courses available throughout the city. The compiled information can serve as a comprehensive directory to be used by immigrants, settlement workers, ESL instructors and immigrant agencies alike.

Reflection

As a conclusion to the report, it is appropriate at this point for the researcher to reflect on the entire research process as a learning experience.

The first and foremost thought is that the report is not perfect. This conclusion is arrived at from a cumulation of a number of issues that arose from the research experience.

On the whole, the participants' responses were open and candid. They were prepared and ready to discuss various issues raised by the researcher. Yet, obviously, there were some who were more spontaneous and willing to elaborate their responses than others. In some cases, they were even eager to relate to the researcher their experiences and concerns. This, to a great extent, confirms the researcher's feeling that there is, in these women, a rich reservoir of human experiences waiting to be tapped and explored.

This, then, leads to the issue of how best to explore human experiences in a naturalistic setting. Judging from the research experience, ~~a~~ case study method with a smaller sample of six or seven participants might have been a more fruitful approach. It could enable the researcher to delve deeper into the various educational and adjustment issues addressed in the study. Definitely, more than one interview should be conducted to allow for enough time and opportunity for the researcher and the researched to get acquainted, to interact and to establish the kind of trust and rapport needed to conduct the research effectively. It is found that the more the researched knew about the researcher, the more at ease they were in the interview process.

The question of ethics arose immediately following one particular interview session. Some information given by a participant was mentioned in the journal "She had contradicted what she told me earlier...Acknowledging that she is now separated from her husband surely indicated that she had trusted me enough to disclose the truth. But then, she also mentioned that this situation should not be filtered back to the Chinese community. I am not sure what I should do with this information. I wonder how this situation has influenced various aspects of her life..." After thinking through the situation and carefully assessing the data, this participant's wish was honoured. Undoubtedly, the incident created some tension on the researcher especially throughout the data analysis process. Had there been a follow-up session whereby the transcribed data could be examined by the participant, the researcher might have presented the data as was told but leaving room for revision if so requested by the participant. This also points to the fact that a follow-up session after the data analysis is highly desirable.

In the reporting process, it was found that presenting the data as it was originally intended and interpreted by the participants was not an easy task. For instance, the quotations used throughout the analysis were not sufficient to illustrate some special meanings that the participants related to the researcher in their particular context. By presenting their situation in groups, some special individual meaning was lost. This again, reaffirms the value of a case study through which individual behaviour, reaction and reasoning could be explained in context. Most of all, this approach has the power to adequately explain and unfold the complexity inherent in most human experiences.

The research experience has been satisfactory in the sense that the researcher realizes the limitations of the study itself. But, above all it was also learned that, in an interpretive study, the researcher has to be a skillful enquirer and listener who is sensitive, perceptive and observant and who knows when and how to pose or answer questions in the interview process.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE Appendix A

Part One - Personal Data

1. What is your age?
2. What is your marital status?
3. What is your religion?
4. What languages do you speak?
5. What is your country of origin?
6. What is your parents' country of origin?
7. What is your husband's country of origin?
8. When did you immigrate to Canada?
9. What kind of immigrant were you when you first came?
10. What are your reasons for immigration?
11. What are your expectations of immigration?
12. Do you plan to return home? Why or why not?
13. Were you an urban or rural dweller at home?
14. What was your family size before immigration?
15. What is your family size after immigration?
16. What is your occupation before immigration?
17. What was your occupation after immigration?
18. How many children do you have?
19. What are their age, education, and occupation?
20. What are your parents' education and occupation?
21. What is your husband's education and occupation?
22. What are your siblings' education and occupation?

Appendix A

Part Two - Adjustment Experience

1. What do you think of your English proficiency?
2. How often and under what circumstances do you use English?
3. Do you listen to English radio broadcasts, watch English TV programmes or read English newspapers or books?
4. Do you drive, why or why not?
5. Who does the most chores in your family? why?
6. Who is the major decision-maker in your family? Why?
7. Do you have any friends or relatives in Edmonton?
8. Do you have any Canadian friends? Why or why not?
9. Who do you socialize with most? why?
10. What are the easier things for you to adjust to?
11. What are the most difficult things to adjust to?
12. What do you think of your total adaptation experience, economically, socially, culturally and psychologically?

Part Three - Educational Experience

Past

1. What was your educational background?
2. How did you arrive at your educational decision?
3. Was there any thing, person, or event that had a major influence (positive or negative) on your past educational experience?

4. Did you encounter any difficulty in your education?

5. How important was education in your life before immigration? Why?

6. Was your education at home of any benefit here?

Present

7. What educational activities are/have you been involved in here?

8. Describe the activities, and how you learnt about them?

9. What factors decided your involvement in learning?

10. Was there any thing, person, or event that had a major influence (positive or negative) on your education here?

11. Did you encounter any difficulty in your education here?

12. Is the educational experience of benefit to you?

13. Would you have been involved in the same educational activities at home? Why or why not?

14. Do you plan to participate in any learning activities in the near future (the next 2 years)? Why or why not?

15. How long a period or how much energy would you invest in these educational activities, and for what purpose?

Pilot Profile #1

Date: October 15, 1986
Place: Interviewee's home
Duration: 1 hour

Chin is an eighty-two-year-old widow who came to Canada, sponsored by her son, an engineer who immigrated to Canada in the 1960s. Chin has three children, two of whom, a son and a daughter, now live in China.

Chin moved to Canada in 1978. She became involved in ESL training at AVC, on a regular basis, shortly after her arrival. However, she has stopped attending classes this year, due to ill health (severe arthritis). She stated her involvement in learning was facilitated by some previous knowledge of English, her desire to communicate with others, her friends' encouragement, and the close proximity of her home (downtown) to AVC. Since she is living on her own, she finds the classes have helped her cultural adjustment to the country and have fulfilled her social need of meeting and interacting with other learners and teachers.

Chin was born and raised in Shanghai, China. As an young orphan, she was brought up by her uncle. She received more education than most of her peers in that period in China. According to her, education was seen as a means to earn a livelihood as she had no parents to depend on. She graduated from high school, and received her teacher training in a university. Her uncle, who was in the field of education, was instrumental in her choosing education as a career. She enjoyed school and did well throughout her school years. She received a westernized type of education in the early 1900s, in Shanghai.

She taught for two years in Shanghai before getting married. After her marrige, she became a housewife, looking after her children and husband at home. Before the Communist take-over in China, she escaped with her family to Hong Kong, where She lived for almost thirty years before moving to Edmonton. She found the most difficult thing to adjust to, at first, was the weather. Despite some infrequent interaction with a few Canadian friends, she mainly socializes with her Chinese friends. She now lives on her own in a senior citizens' housing development. Now, her biggest problem is loneliness.

General Impression

A lot of prompting and paraphrasing was required at the beginning of the interview. She stated that the times and dates of major events in her past life might not be very accurate. On the whole, she was very cooperative, though a bit reserved when talking about her family situation; for instance, personal conflicts with her daughter-in-law.

Pilot Profile #2

Pat is a thirty-six-year-old married woman who emigrated to Canada in 1978. Her parents were both born in Hong Kong, and both received no more than a grade 3 education. Pat has three brothers, two of whom have approximately a grade 6 education. A younger brother is living with her and has just finished graduate studies in the United States.

Pat finished high school in Hong Kong. She recalled that her educational experience was rather unpleasant, due to poor health, poverty and bad experiences in school. She could not get along with her teachers in school; they were very authoritarian. She was virtually a 'loner' in school. Although she came from a poor family, her parents were quite supportive of her education. After high school graduation, she started working as a government clerk. She was married fifteen years ago and now has a son aged thirteen.

In 1978 Pat and her family moved to Toronto, where her husband completed a master's degree at O.I.S.E. After his graduation, they applied for immigrant status and, in 1979, they moved to a small town in Alberta, where her husband works as a social worker. Pat worked briefly in Toronto as a dietary aide. Since then, she has not worked outside her home.

Pat has not been invovled in any formal learning activity in Canada. She stated that her adjustment to Canada was difficult, as she felt lonely, depressed, and not too sure of her English. Most of all, she had difficulty establishing friendships with Canadians. She felt that she was discriminated against on her job because of her lack of English proficiency. The fact that she now lives in a small town makes it impossible for her to get involved in learning activities. She indicated that she felt that further language training might have been useful. And she indicated that she needs to know more about the existing educational programmes and learning activities. She speculated that she might have trouble getting credit for her former education. And she also cited poor health and family resistance as among the reasons she was not involved in learning. She would like to get involved in voice training and performing arts, but her mother, who now lives with her family, is strongly opposed to the idea of her performing and singing in public.

Although she has not participated in any learning activities here, she feels positive about the more open atmosphere of learning in the western tradition. And she stated, in future, if her health improves, she would like to participate in some personal development courses.

General Impression

Pat is a very articulate individual, very open in the discussion about her own experience.